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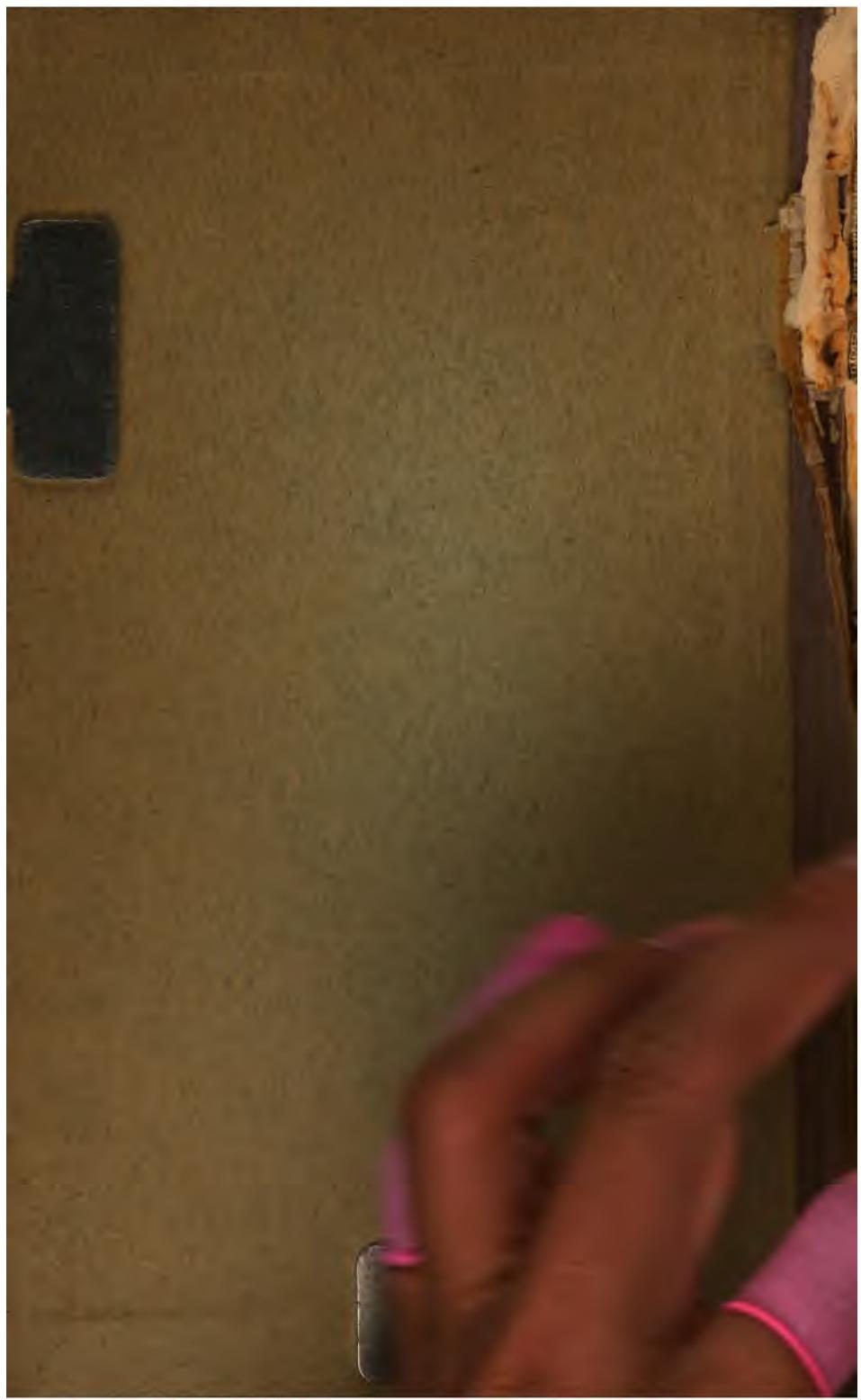
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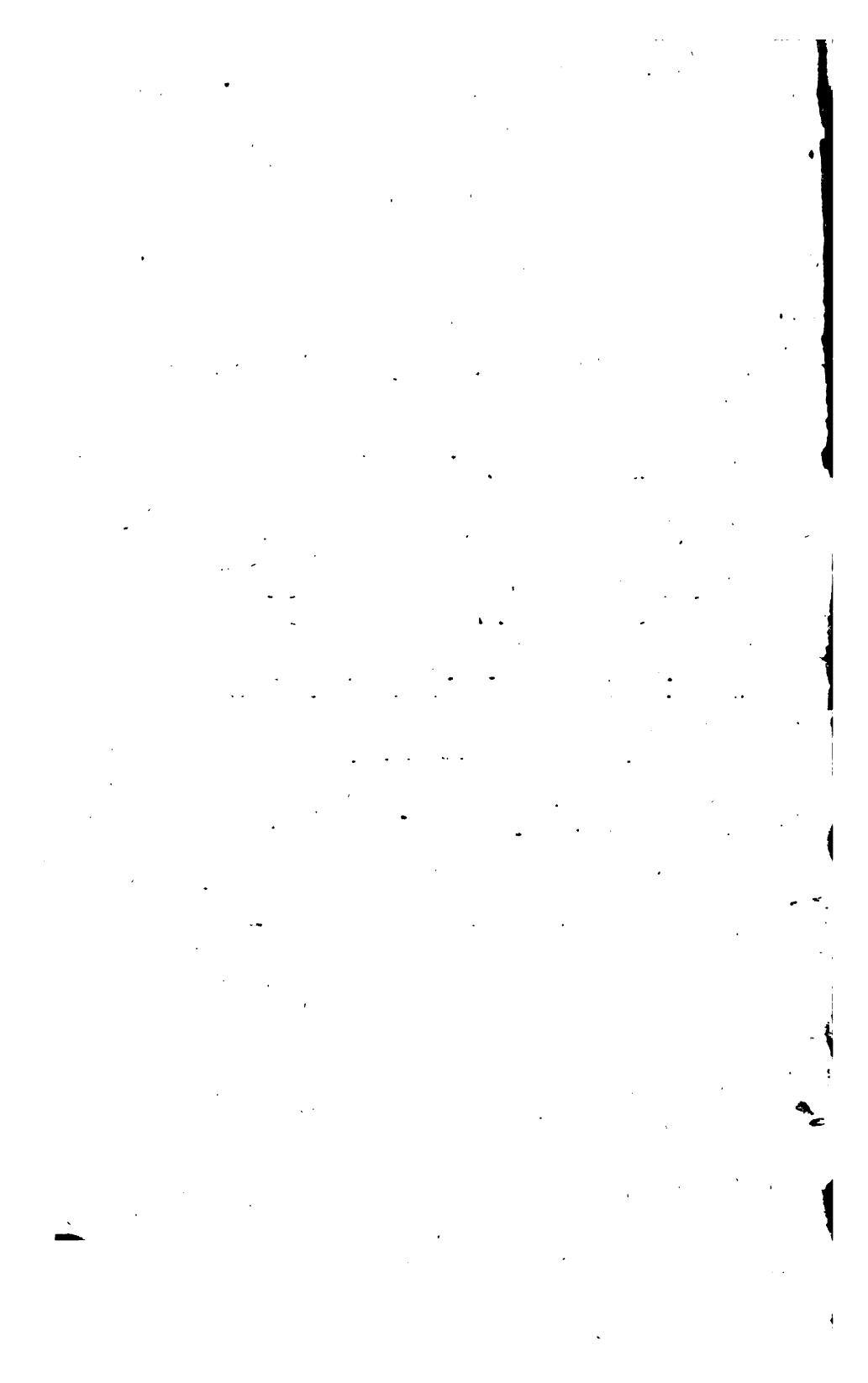
POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF

F R E D E R I C II.

K I N G o f P R U S S I A.

V O L. V.



POLITICAL, PHILOSOPHICAL,

AND

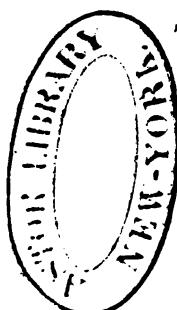
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M I S C E L L A N I E S.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

THOMAS HOLCROFT.



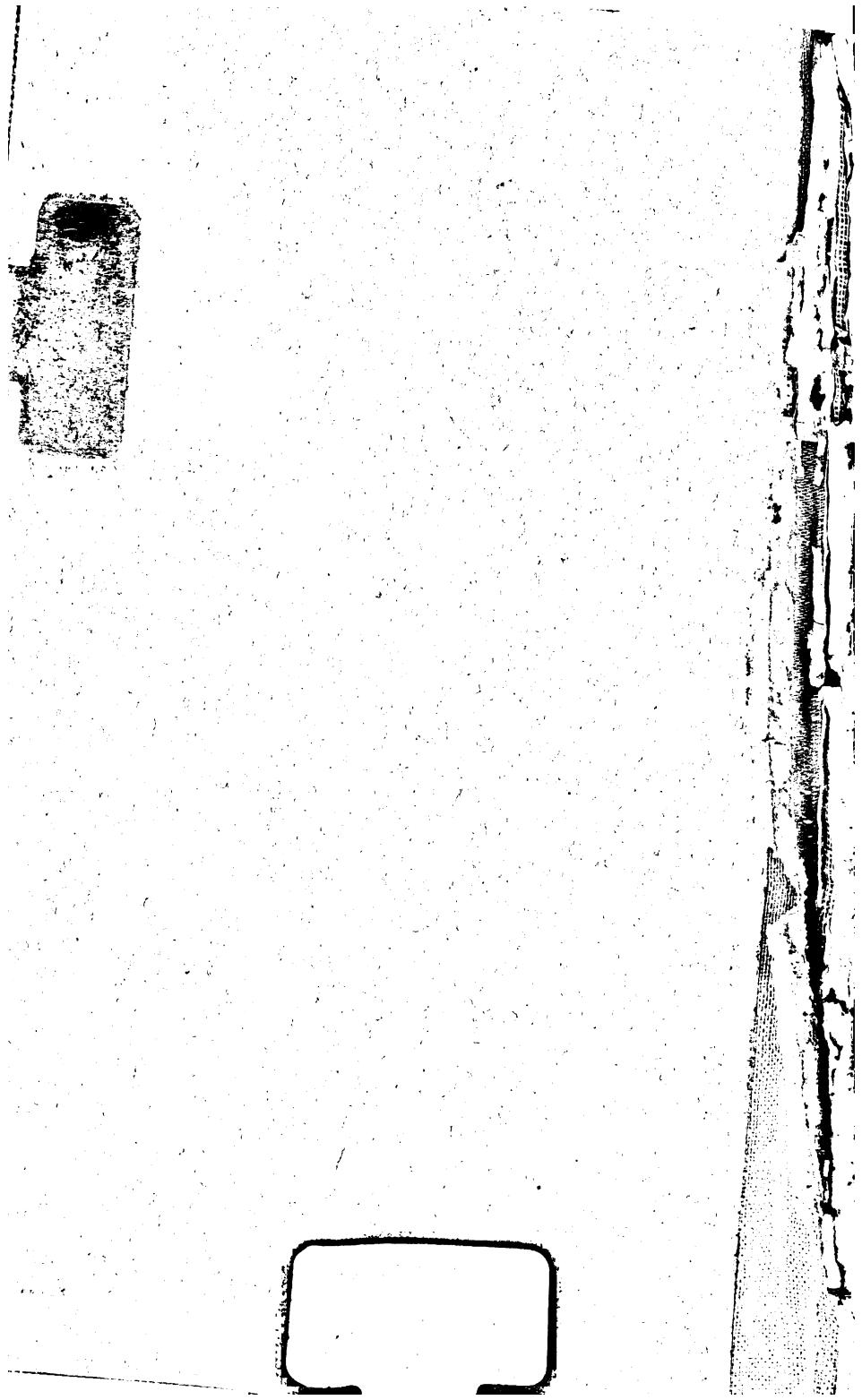
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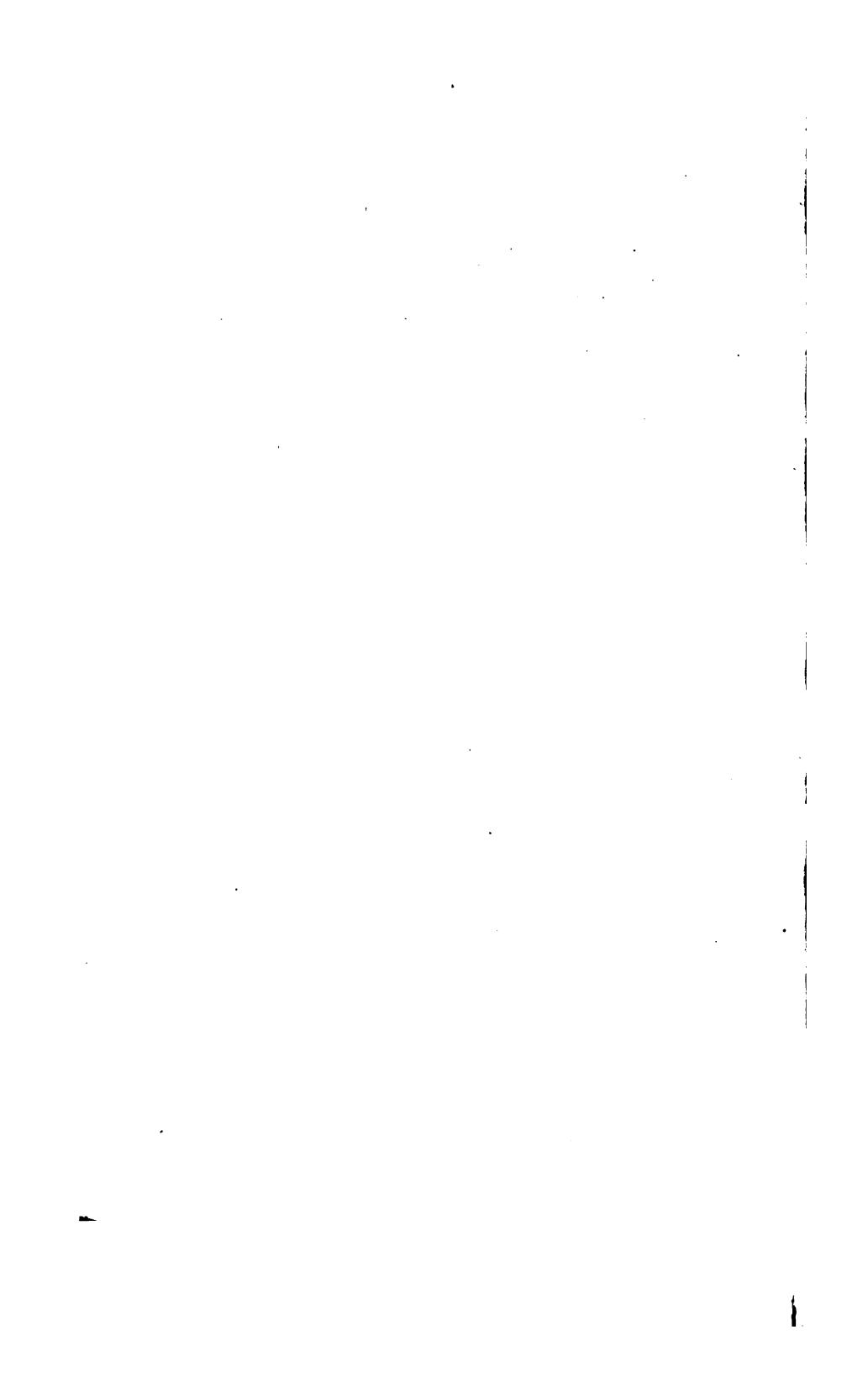
G. G. J. AND J. ROBINSON,

PATERNOSTER-ROW.

M.DCC.LXXXIX.







POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF

FREDERICK II.

KING OF PRUSSIA.

VOL. V.



A Letter written with the King's own hand to the Minister of State, Count Herzberg, in 1781, accompanying his Majesty's Essay on Forms of Government.

THE following are some reflections on government which I confide to you; they have been printed in my palace and are not intended to be made public, but to remain with you.

I am, &c.

F R E D E R I C.

The Answer of Count Herzberg to the King.

SIRE,

YOUR majesty has bestowed on my most respectful gratitude a very precious mark of benevolence, by intrusting to me your reflections on forms of government, and the duties of sovereigns. This excellent little book shall not, according to your gracious commands, depart from my hands; though it merits to be the manual of princes, and must hereafter so become. In this they will find ideal perfections, to which they will think it difficult to attain; but your majesty however has afforded an example of its reality, which cannot be doubted. You have at

the same time given a decisive proof by your own reign, in favour of monarchical government, which must soon become the favourite government of most nations, since your majesty has inspired cotemporary monarchs with a desire to govern for themselves, and to walk in the paths of immortality.

For myself, my opinion has always been in favour of monarchy; and I am well persuaded that private persons may, under monarchical governments, exercise patriotic virtues with more real effect, though with less splendour, than under any other form. I shall ever consider it as my greatest happiness to have been born and to have lived under the reign of your majesty; nor shall I, to the last moment of existence, cease to be with the most devoted respect,

Sire,

Of all the servants of your majesty,

The most humble

And the most obedient,

H E R Z B E R G.

Berlin, January 26, 1781.

A N
E S S A Y

ON

FORMS OF GOVERNMENT.

If we look back into the most remote antiquity, we shall find that the people whose history has descended to us led pastoral lives, and did not form social bodies. What the book of Genesis relates of the history of the Patriarchs is sufficient proof. Previous to this small Jewish nation, the Egyptians must in like manner have been dispersed over those countries which the Nile did not submerge ; and many ages no doubt passed away before the vanquished river would permit the people to assemble in small towns.

towns. From the Grecian history we learn the names of founders of states, and of those legislators who first assembled the Greeks in bodies. This nation was long in a savage state, as well as all the nations of the globe. Had the annals of the Etruscans, and those of the Samnite, Sabine and other tribes, come down to us, we should assuredly have learnt that they lived in distinct families, before they were assembled and united.

The Gauls were forming into societies at the time they were conquered by Julius Cæsar; but it appears Great Britain had not attained this point of perfection, when the conqueror first passed into that island with his Roman legions. In the age of this great man, the Germans could only be compared to what the Iroquois and Algonquins, or some equally savage people, are at present. They existed by hunting and fishing, and on their milk and herds. A German thought himself debased by cultivating the earth; this was a labour performed by the slaves he had taken in war. The Hercynian forest, at that time, almost wholly covered the vast extent of country which at present composes the German empire. The nation could not be populous, for want of sufficient food; and this no doubt was the true cause of the prodigious emigrations of the northern people, who hastened southward

ESSAY ON FORMS OF GOVERNMENT. 7

In search of lands ready cleared, under a less rigorous climate.

We are astonished at imagining the human race so long existing in a brutal state, and without forming itself into societies. Reasons are accordingly suggested, such as might induce people like these to unite in bodies. It must have been the violence and pillage which existed, among neighbouring hordes, that could have first inspired such savage families with the wish of uniting, that they might secure their possessions by mutual defence. Hence laws took birth, which taught those societies to prefer the general to individual good. From that time, no person durst seize on the effects of another, because of the dread of chastisement. The life, the wife, and the wealth of a neighbour were sacred; and, if the whole society were attacked, it was the duty of the whole to assemble for its defence. The grand truth,—“ That we should do unto “ others as they should do unto us”—became the principle of laws, and of the social compact. Hence originated the love of our country, which was regarded as the asylum of happiness.

But, as these laws could neither be maintained nor executed, unless some one should incessantly watch for their preservation, magistrates arose, out of this necessity, whom the people elected,

and to whom they subjected themselves. Let it be carefully remembered that the preservation of the laws was the sole reason which induced men to allow of, and to elect, a superior; because this is the true origin of sovereign power. The magistrate, thus appointed, was the first servant of the state. When rising states had any thing to fear from their neighbours, the magistrate armed the people, and flew to the defence of the citizens.

That general instinct, in men, which leads them to procure for themselves the greatest possible happiness, occasioned the creation of various forms of government. Some imagined that, by confiding themselves to the guidance of a few sages, they should find this great happiness; hence the aristocratic form. Others preferred an oligarchy. Athens, and most of the Grecian republics, chose a democratical government. Persia, and the east, bowed beneath despotism. The Romans, for a time, had kings; but, weary of the tyranny of the Tarquins, they changed the monarchy into an aristocracy. Presently tired of the severity of the Patricians, who oppressed them by usury, the people left the city, and did not return to Rome till the senate had first approved the tribunes, elected by Plebeians for their defence against

against the power of the great. The people afterward rendered their authority almost supreme. Those who seized violently on government, and who, following the guidance of the passions and of caprice, reversed the laws and overturned those fundamental principles which had been established for the preservation of society, were denominated tyrants.

But, however sage the legislators, and those who first assembled the people in bodies were, however good their intentions might be, not one of these governments is found to have maintained its perfect integrity. And why? Because men are imperfect, consequently so are their works: because the citizens, employed by the prince, were blinded by individual interest, which always overthrows the general good: and, in fine, because there is no stability on earth.

In aristocracies, the abuse which the principal members of the society make of their authority is the general cause of succeeding revolutions. The Roman democracy was destroyed by the people themselves. The blind multitude of the Plebeians suffered themselves to be corrupted by ambitious citizens, by whom they were afterward deprived of their liberty, and enslaved. This is what England has to dread, if the lower house of parliament should

should not prefer the true interest of the nation to that infamous corruption by which it is degraded.

As to monarchical government, of this there are various forms. The ancient feudal government, which some ages since was almost general in Europe, was established by the conquest of the Barbarians. The general of a horde rendered himself sovereign of the conquered country, and divided its provinces among his principal officers; who, it is true, were subject to the lord paramount, and who supplied him with troops when required; but, as some of these vassals became equally powerful with their chief, this formed state within state; and hence a series of civil wars, which were the misfortune of the whole. In Germany, these vassals are become independent; in France, England, and Spain, they are suppressed. The only example that remains, of that abominable form of government, is the republic of Poland.

In Turkey, the sovereign is despotic: he may with impunity commit the most atrocious cruelties; but it also often happens, by a vicissitude common to barbarous nations, or from a just retribution, that he in his turn is strangled.

With respect to the true monarchical government,

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ment, it is the best or the worst of all others, accordingly as it is administered.

We have remarked that men granted pre-eminence to one of their equals, in expectation that he should do them certain services. These services consisted in the maintenance of the laws; a strict execution of justice; an employment of his whole powers to prevent any corruption of manners; and defending the state against its enemies. It is the duty of this magistrate to pay attention to agriculture; it should be his care that provisions for the nation should be in abundance, and that commerce and industry should be encouraged. He is a perpetual sentinel, who must watch the acts and the conduct of the enemies of the state. His foresight and prudence should form timely alliances, which should be made with those who might most conduce to the interest of the association.

By this short abstract, the various branches of knowledge, which each article in particular requires, will be perceived. To this must be added a profound study of the local situation of the country, which it is the magistrate's duty to govern, and a perfect knowledge of the genius of the nation; for the sovereign who sins through ignorance is as culpable as he who sins through malice: the first is the guilt of idleness,

idleness, the latter of a vicious heart; but the evil that results to society is the same.

Princes and monarchs, therefore, are not invested with supreme authority that they may, with impunity, riot in debauchery and voluptuousness. They are not raised by their fellow citizens in order that their pride may pompously display itself, and contemptuously insult simplicity of manners, poverty and wretchedness. Government is not intrusted to them that they may be surrounded by a crowd of useless people, whose idleness engenders every vice.

The ill administration of monarchical government originates in various causes, the source of which is in the character of the sovereign. Thus a prince addicted to women suffers himself to be governed by his mistresses, and his favourites, who abuse the ascendancy they have over his mind, commit injustice, protect the most vicious, sell places, and are guilty of other similar acts of infamy. If the prince, through debility, should abandon the helm of the state to mercenary hands, I mean to ministers, in that case, each having different views, no one proceeds on general plans: the new minister fritters away what he finds already established, however excellent that may be, to acquire the character of novelty, and execute his own schemes, generally

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rally to the detriment of the public good. His successors do the like; they destroy and overturn with equal want of understanding, that they may be supposed to possess originality. Hence that succession of change and variation which allows no project time to take root; hence confusion, disorder, and every vice of a bad administration. Prevaricators have a ready excuse; they shelter their turpitude under these perpetual changes.

Men attach themselves to that which appertains to them, and the state does not appertain to these ministers, for which reason they have not its real good at heart; business is carelessly executed, and with a kind of stoic indifference; and hence results the decay of justice, and the ill administration of the finances and the military. From a monarchy, as it was, the government degenerates into a true aristocracy, in which ministers and generals conduct affairs, according to their own fancies. There is no longer any comprehensive system; each pursues his own plans, and the central point, the point of unity, is lost. As all the wheels of a watch correspond to effect the same purpose, which is that of measuring time, so ought the springs of government to be regulated, that all the different branches of administration may equally concur to the greatest

greatest good of the state; an important object, of which we ought never to lose sight.

We may add, the personal interest of ministers and generals usually occasions them to counteract each other without ceasing, and sometimes to impede the execution of the best plans, because they had not been conceived by themselves. But the evil is at its utmost, when perverse minds are able to persuade the sovereign that his welfare and the public good are two things. The monarch then becomes the enemy of his people, without knowing why; is severe, rigorous, and inhuman, from mistake; for, the principle on which he acts being false, the consequences must necessarily be the same.

The sovereign is attached by indissoluble ties to the body of the state; hence it follows that he, by repercussion, is sensible of all the ills which afflict his subjects; and the people, in like manner, suffer from the misfortunes which affect their sovereign. There is but one general good, which is that of the state. If the monarch lose his provinces, he is no longer able as formerly to assist his subjects. If misfortune have obliged him to contract debts, they must be liquidated by the poor citizens; and, in return, if the people are not numerous, and if they are oppressed by poverty, the sovereign is destitute of

of all resource. These are truths so incontestable that there is no need to insist on them further.

I once more repeat, the sovereign represents the state; he and his people form but one body, which can only be happy as far as united by concord. The prince is to the nation he governs what the head is to the man; it is his duty to see, think, and act for the whole community, that he may procure it every advantage of which it is capable. If it be intended that a monarchial should excel a republican government, sentence is pronounced on the sovereign. He must be active, possess integrity, and collect his whole powers, that he may be able to run the career he has commenced. Here follow my ideas concerning his duties.

He ought to procure exact and circumstantial information of the strength and weakness of his country, as well relative to pecuniary resources as to population, finance, trade, laws, and the genius of the nation whom he is appointed to govern. If the laws are good they will be clear in their definitions; otherwise, chicanery will seek to elude their spirit to its advantage, and arbitrarily and irregularly determine on the fortunes of individuals. Law-suits ought to be as short as possible, to prevent the ruin of the appellants, who consume in useless expences what is justly and

and duly their right. This branch of government cannot be too carefully watched, that every possible barrier may be opposed to the avidity of judges and counsellors. Every person is kept within the limits of their duty, by occasional visits into the provinces. Whoever imagines himself to be injured will venture to make his complaints to the commission; and those who are found to be prevaricators ought to be severely punished. It is perhaps superfluous to add that the penalty ought never to exceed the crime; that violence never ought to supersede law; and that it were better the sovereign should be too merciful than too severe.

As every person who does not proceed on principle is inconsistent in his conduct, it is still more necessary that the magistrate who watches over the public good should act from a determinate system of politics, war, finance, commerce, and law. Thus, for example, a people of mild manners ought not to have severe laws, but such as are adapted to their character. The basis of such systems ought always to be correspondent to the greatest good society can receive. Their principles ought to be conformable to the situation of the country, to its ancient customs, if they are good, and to the genius of the nation.

As an instance, it is a known truth, in politics, that the most natural allies, and consequently the best, are those whose interests concur, and who are not such near neighbours as to be engaged in any contest respecting frontiers. It sometimes happens that strange accidents give place to extraordinary alliances. We have seen, in the present times, nations that had always been rivals, and even enemies, united under the same banners. But these are events that rarely take birth, and which never can serve as examples. Such connections can be no more than momentary ; whereas the other kind, which are contracted from a unity of interests, are alone capable of exertion. In the present situation of Europe, when all her princes are armed, and among whom preponderating powers rise up capable of crushing the feeble, prudence requires alliances should be formed with other powers, as well to secure aid, in case of attack, as to repress the dangerous projects of enemies, and to sustain all just pretensions, by the succour of such allies, in opposition to those by whom they are controverted.

Nor is this sufficient. It is necessary to have among our neighbours, especially among our enemies, eyes and ears which shall be open to receive, and report with fidelity, what they have

seen and heard. Men are wicked. Care must especially be taken not to suffer surprise, because whatever surprises intimidates and terrifies, which never happens when preparations are made, however vexatious the event may be which there is reason to expect. European politics are so fallacious that the most sage may become dupes, if they are not always alert, and on their guard.

The military system ought, in like manner, to rest on good principles, which from experience are known to be certain. The genius of the nation ought to be understood; of what it is capable, and how far its safety may be risked by leading it against the enemy. The warlike customs of the Greeks and Romans are interdicted, in these ages. The discovery of gunpowder has entirely changed the mode of making war. A superiority of fire at present decides the day. Discipline, rules, and tactics have all been changed; in order that they may conform to this new custom; and the recent and enormous abuse of numerous trains of artillery, which incumber armies, obliges others, in like manner, to adopt this method; as well to maintain themselves in their posts as to attack the foe in those which they shall occupy, should reasons of importance so require. So many

many new refinements have, therefore, so much changed the art of war that it would, at present, be unpardonable temerity in a general who, in imitation of Turenne, Condé, or Luxembourg, should risk a battle according to the dispositions made by those great commanders, in the age in which they lived. Victory then was carried by valour and strength: it is at present decided by artillery; and the art of the general consists in his near approach to the army of the enemy, without suffering his own troops to be destroyed previous to the attack. To gain this advantage, it is necessary he should silence the fire of the enemy, by the superiority of that with which it is opposed.

The art of castrametation, or of deriving all possible advantage from the situation of the ground, will however remain eternally unchanged in the military system. Should new discoveries continue to be made, the generals who then shall live must of force comply with these novelties, and change whatever may need correction in tactics.

There are states which, from their situation and constitution, must be maritime powers: such are England, Holland, France, Spain, and Denmark. They are surrounded by the sea, and the distant colonies which they possess

oblige them to keep a marine, to maintain communication and trade between the mother country and these detached members. There are other states, such as Austria, Poland, Prussia, and even Russia, some of which may well do without shipping; and others that would commit an unpardonable fault, in politics, were they to divide their forces by employing a part of their troops at sea, of the services of which they indispensably stand in need by land.

The number of troops which a state maintains ought to be in proportion to the troops maintained by its enemies. Their force should be equal, or the weakest is in danger of being oppressed. It perhaps may be objected that a king ought to depend on the aid of his allies. The reasoning would be good were allies what they ought to be; but their zeal is only lukewarm; and he who shall depend upon another as upon himself will most certainly be deceived. If frontiers permit them to be defended by fortresses, there must be no neglect in building, nor any expense spared to bring them to perfection. Of this France has given an example, and she has found the advantage of it on different occasions.

But neither politics nor the army can prosper if the finances are not kept in the greatest order, and if the prince himself be not a prudent economist.

nomist. Money is like the wand of the necromancer, for by its aid miracles are performed. Grand political views, the maintenance of the military, and the best conceived plans for the ease of the people, will all remain in a lethargic state, if not animated by money. The œconomy of the sovereign is the more useful to the public good, because if he have not sufficient funds in reserve, either to supply the expenses of war, without loading his people with extraordinary taxes, or to succour citizens in times of public calamity, all these burthens will fall on the subject, who will be without the resource, in such unhappy times, of which they will then stand in the most need.

No government can exist without taxation, which is equally necessary to the republic and to the monarchy. The sovereign who labours in the public cause must be paid by the public; the judge the same, that he may have no need to prevaricate. The soldier must be supported that he may commit no violence, for want of having whereon to subsist. In like manner, it is necessary that those persons who are employed in collecting the finances should receive such salaries as may not lay them under any temptation to rob the public. These various expenses demand very considerable sums, and to these

must still be added money that should only be laid apart to serve for extraordinary exigences. This money must all be necessarily levied on the people; and the grand art consists in levying so as not to oppress. That taxes may be equally and not arbitrarily laid on, surveys and registers should be made, by which, if the people are properly classed, the money will be proportionate to the income of the persons paying. This is a thing so necessary that it would be an unpardonable fault, in finance, if ill-imposed taxes should disgust the husbandman with his labours. Having performed his duties, it is afterward necessary he and his family should live in a certain degree of ease. Far from oppressing the nursing fathers of the state, they ought to be encouraged in the cultivation of the lands; for in this cultivation the true riches of a country consists.

The earth furnishes the most necessary part of subsistence, and those who till it are, as we have already said, the true nursing fathers of society. I shall perhaps be answered that Holland subsists, although the land does not yield a hundredth part of what the people consume. To this I reply, Holland is a small state, in which trade is the substitute for agriculture; but the more vast any government is the more ought rural œconomy to be encouraged.

Excise

Excise is another species of taxes, levied on cities, and this must be managed by able persons; otherwise, those provisions which are most necessary to life, such as bread, small beer, meat, &c. will be overloaded; and the weight will fall on the soldier, the labourer, and the artizan. The result will be, unhappily to the people, that the price of labour will be raised; consequently merchandize will become so dear as not to be saleable in foreign markets. Such is at present the case in Holland and in England. These two nations, having contracted immensely heavy debts in the last wars, have imposed new taxes to pay the interest; but, having very unadvisedly taxed labour, they have almost ruined their manufactures. Hence, all things having become dearer in Holland, the Dutch are obliged to purchase their cloths from Verviers and Liege; and England has lost a very considerable sale of her woollens in Germany. To obviate such inconveniences, the sovereign ought frequently to remember the condition of the poor, to imagine himself in the place of the peasant or the manufacturer, and then to say, " Were I born one among the class of citizens whose labours constitute the wealth of the state, what should I require from the king?" The answer which, on such a supposition, good

sense would suggest it is his duty to put in practice.

In most of the kingdoms of Europe there are provinces in which the peasants are attached to the glebe, or are serfs to their lords. This, of all conditions, is the most unhappy, and that at which humanity most revolts. No man certainly was born to be the slave of his equal. We reasonably detest such an abuse ; and it is supposed that nothing more than will is wanting to abolish so barbarous a custom. But this is not true; it is held on ancient tenures, and contracts made between the landholders and the colonists. Tillage is regulated according to the service performed by the peasantry ; and whoever should suddenly desire to abolish this abominable administration would entirely overthrow the mode of managing estates, and must be obliged, in part, to indemnify the nobility for the losses which their rents must suffer.

The state of manufactures and of trade, an article no less important, next presents itself. For the country to be preserved in prosperity, it is indubitably necessary that the balance of trade should be in its favour. If it pay more for importation than it gains by exportation, the result will be that it will be annually impoverished. Let us suppose a purse in which there

there are a hundred ducats, from which let us daily take one, and put none in, and every body will allow that in a hundred days the purse will be empty. The means to avoid incurring any such loss are to work up all raw materials of which the country is in possession, and to manufacture foreign raw materials, that the price of labour may be gained, in order to procure a foreign market.

Three things are to be considered in respect to commerce: first the surplus of native products which are exported; next the products of foreign states, which enrich those by whom they are carried; and thirdly foreign merchandize, which home consumption obliges the state to import. The trade of any kingdom must be regulated according to these three articles, for of these only is it susceptible, according to the nature of things. England, Holland, France, Spain, and Portugal, have possessions in the two Indies, and more extensive resources for their merchant ships than other kingdoms. To profit by such advantages as we are in possession of, and to undertake nothing beyond our strength, is the advice of wisdom.

We have now to speak of what are the most proper means invariably to maintain those provinces in abundance, of which society stands in absolute need,

need, that it may continue flourishing. The first is to be careful that the lands are well cultivated; to clear such grounds as are capable of tillage; to increase the breed of sheep and cattle, that the more may be gained by milk, butter, cheese and manure; afterward to obtain an exact statement of the quantity of the various species of corn, grown in good, indifferent, and bad seasons, and to subtract the quantity consumed, that from the result information may be gained of the surplus, and the point at which exportation ought to stop; or of the deficiency in consumption, and of the consequently necessary importation. Every sovereign, actuated by the public good, is obliged to keep storehouses abundantly furnished, that supplies may be ready, when the harvest is bad, and famine prevented. During the scarcity of the year 1771 and 1772, Germany beheld the miseries with which Saxony and the provinces of the empire were afflicted, because this very useful precaution had not been taken. The people pounded oak bark, on which they fed, and this wretched food did but accelerate death. Numerous families perished unsuccoured, and the desolation was universal. The survivors were pale, livid, and lean, and fled from their country to seek food elsewhere. The sight of them

them excited compassion: they would have been pitied by a heart of iron. What were the reproaches with which their governors ought to have loaded themselves, spectators as they were of such calamities, and unable to afford any relief!

We shall now speak of another article, which perhaps is equally interesting. There are few countries in which the people are all of one religious opinion; they often totally differ. There are some who are called sectaries. The question then is started—Is it requisite that the people should all think alike, or may each one be allowed to think as he pleases? Gloomy politicians will tell us every body ought to be of the same opinion, that there may be no division among the citizens. The priest will add whoever does not think like me is damned, and it is by no means proper that my king should be the king of the damned. The inevitable deduction is they must be destroyed in this world, that they may be the more prosperous in the next.

To this it is answered that all the members of one society never thought alike; that, among Christian nations, the majority are Anthropomorphites; that, among the Catholics, most of the people are idolaters, for I shall never be persuaded

persuaded that a clown is capable of distinguishing between *Latria* and *Hyperdulia*. He simply and really adores the image he invokes. Therefore there are a number of heretics in all Christian sects. What is more, each man believes that which appears to him to be truth. A poor wretch may be constrained to pronounce a certain form of prayer, although he inwardly refuse his consent. His persecutor consequently has gained nothing. But, if we revert to the origin of all society, it will be found evident that the sovereign has no right to interfere in the belief of the subject. Would it not be madness to imagine men who have said to another man, their equal, "We raise you to be our superior, because we are in love with slavery; and we bestow on you the power of directing our thoughts, according to your will?" On the contrary, they have said, "We have need of you for the maintenance of those laws which we are willing to obey, and that we may be wisely governed and defended; but we also require that you should respect our freedom." This is the sentence pronounced, and it is without appeal. Nay, tolerance is itself so advantageous, to the people among whom it is established, that it constitutes the happiness of the state. As soon as there is that

that perfect freedom of opinion, the people are all at peace; whereas persecution has given birth to the most bloody civil wars, and such as have been the most inveterate and the most destructive. The least evil that results from persecution is to occasion the persecuted to emigrate. The population of France has suffered in certain provinces, and those provinces still are sensible of the revocation of the edict of Nantes.

Such are in general the duties imposed upon a prince, from which, in order that he may never depart, he ought often to recollect he himself is but a man, like the least of his subjects. If he be the first general, the first minister of the realm, it is not that he should remain the shadow of authority, but that he should fulfil the duties of such titles. He is only the first servant of the state, who is obliged to act with probity and prudence; and to remain as totally disinterested as if he were each moment liable to render an account of his administration to his fellow citizens.

Thus is he culpable, if he be prodigal of the money of the people, dispersing the produce of the taxes in luxury, pomp, or licentiousness. It is for him to watch over morals, which are the guardians of the laws, and to improve the national

tional education, and not pervert it by ill examples. One of the most important objects is the preservation of good morals, in all their purity ; to which the sovereign may greatly contribute, by distinguishing and rewarding those citizens who have performed virtuous actions, and testifying his contempt for such as are so depraved as not to blush at their own disorders. The prince ought highly to disapprove of every dishonest act, and refuse distinctions to men who are incorrigible.

There is another interesting object which ought not to be lost sight of, and which, if neglected, would be of irreparable prejudice to good morality ; which is that princes are liable too highly to notice persons who are possessed of no other merit than that of great wealth. Honours, so undeservedly bestowed, confirm the people in the vulgar prejudice that wealth, only, is necessary to gain respect. Interest and cupidity will then break forth from the curb by which they are restrained. Each will wish to accumulate riches ; and, to acquire these, the most iniquitous means will be employed. Corruption increases, takes root, and becomes general. Men of abilities and virtue are despised, and the public honour none but the bastards of Midas, who dazzle by their excessive dissipation and

their pomp. To prevent national manners from being perverted to an excess so horrible, the prince ought to be incessantly attentive to distinguish nothing but personal merit, and to shew his contempt for that opulence which is destitute of morals and of virtue.

As the sovereign is properly the head of a family of citizens, the father of his people, he ought on all occasions to be the last refuge of the unfortunate; to be the parent of the orphan, and the husband of the widow; to have as much pity for the lowest wretch as for the greatest courtier; and to shed his benefactions over those who, deprived of all other aid, can only find succour in his benevolence.

Such, according to the principles which we established at the beginning of this Essay, is the most accurate conception we can form of the duties of a sovereign, and the only manner which can render monarchical government good and advantageous. Should the conduct of many princes be found different, it must be attributed to their having reflected but little on their institution, and its derivatory duties. They have borne a burthen with the weight and importance of which they were unacquainted, and have been misled from the want of knowledge; for in our times

times ignorance commits more faults than vice. Such a sketch of sovereignty will perhaps appear to the censorious the archetype of the Stoics ; an ideal sage, who never existed except in imagination, and to whom the nearest approach was Marcus Aurelius. We wish this feeble Essay were capable of forming men like Aurelius ; it would be the highest reward we could possibly expect, at the same time that it would conduce to the good of mankind.

We ought however to add that the prince who should pursue the laborious route which we have indicated would never attain absolute perfection ; because, with all possible good will, he might be deceived in the choice of the persons whom he should employ in administration. Incidents might be depicted under false colours ; his orders might not be punctually executed ; iniquitous acts might be so concealed as never to arrive at his knowledge ; and his ministers, rigorous and consequential, might be too severe, too haughty in their exactions. In fine, it is impossible a monarch should be every where, in an extensive kingdom. Such therefore is and must be the destiny of earthly affairs, that the degree of perfection which the happiness of the people requires, as far as it depends on government,

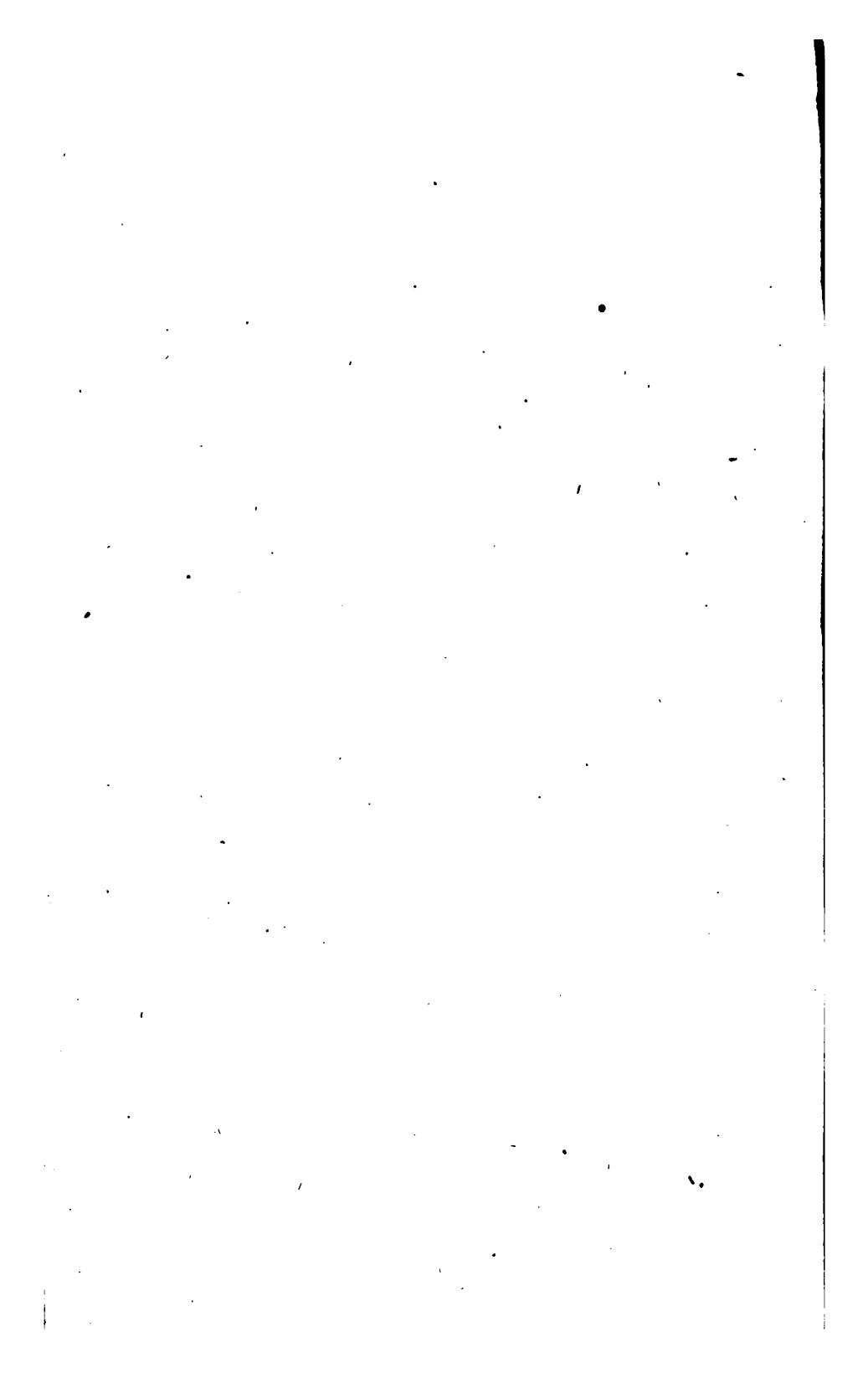
government, ~~ever~~ can be attained. Therefore, in this, as in every thing else, we must of necessity remain satisfied, with that which is the least defective.



D I A L O G U E S

OF THE

D E A D.



D I A L O G U E

BETWEEN THE

DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH, PRINCE EUGENE,

AND THE

PRINCE OF LICHTENSTEIN.

MARLBOROUGH.

CHARON is in immediate danger of dying with hunger ; he can find no more passengers. For some days past, we have received no news from the other world. Should this continue, we shall know nothing of what is doing there ; and that would be a great pity.

EUGENE.

All those who die do not arrive at the happy fields which we inhabit, many of them go to Tartarus ; neither do contagious diseases, pesti-

tilence, and famine continually ravage the earth. Have patience; accidents will happen, and visitors will arrive in crowds.

MARLBOROUGH.

The English hang themselves willingly enough in November; however I do not see any of them coming. Perhaps some act of parliament has forbidden my countrymen to put an end to their existence.

EUGENE.

You have lately been favoured with the company of lord Chesterfield, and have no reason to complain; and I with that of my relation the king of Sardinia. People do not die every day. Let men continue to live, that they may have time to spin their thread of folly before they quit the scene. But do I not perceive a shade?

MARLBOROUGH.

Yes, here is some new comer, who advances toward us.

EUGENE.

I think I know him.—Are not you, prince Wenceslas Lichtenstein?

LICHEN-

LICHTENSTEIN.

The same ; whom a painful death has lately torn from my family, my great possessions, and my honours.

EUGENE.

Such is the common fate of men. But, as you come from distant abodes, you must pay the customary tax, and relate to us the news of the land you have so lately left.

LICHTENSTEIN.

Then I shall have much to tell. Every thing is changed ; past times are eclipsed by the present. You no longer would know Europe : a progress is made in every kind of wisdom.

EUGENE.

I no longer should know Europe !—Doubtless the Imperial house, whose power I confirmed and strengthened, has taken large strides, and made immense acquisitions since my time.

LICHTENSTEIN.

Not precisely so ; for, after your death, having been beaten by the Turks, French and Prussians, we have lost some half a dozen provinces. —— But these are trifles.

EUGENE.

You speak unintelligibly. If you have lost so much, pray what is the progress you have made?

LICHTENSTEIN.

We have improved our finances ; and with the moiety of the provinces, which now remain, our revenue is greater than that received by Charles VI. when in possession of the kingdom of Naples, all the Milanese, Servia, Silesia, and Belgrade. Then, with respect to the army, we maintain a hundred and sixty thousand men, a number which never could be paid during your life. For my part, I have laboured for the perfection of the artillery, and have expended three hundred thousand crowns of my own property to render it respectable. The result is that an army no longer moves without a train of four hundred pieces. You did not understand the use of cannon, with which our camps are converted into fortresses. You scarcely had thirty field-pieces in your army.

EUGENE.

Very true, but with those few I beat the enemy, and did not suffer myself to be beaten.

LICHTEN-

LICHTENSTEIN.

Oh! it is very possible to be beaten. That is but a trifling misfortune, which may happen to a very worthy man.

EUGENE.

Yes, but not by his own neglect.

LICHTENSTEIN.

You must know, men judge better at present than they did formerly. We reason now on mathematical principles, and our arguments are almost infallible; yet I dare not inform you of the judgments that have been the consequence.

EUGENE.

Speak boldly; although dead, you may continue to instruct us.

LICHTENSTEIN.

Since you desire it, I must inform you that the public has so raised the reputation of marshal Daun, though often unfortunate, that his name has totally eclipsed yours.

MARLBOROUGH.

Did you die in a fever delirium; and does the frenzy still continue? I never can suppose the

the memory of Eugene can be so degraded as that a man like Daun, beaten as he has been, can be preferred to this hero, who was more the emperor than Charles VI. who formed such scientific plans of campaigns, who on the greatness of his own credit procured the necessary sums to put the troops in motion, and who afterward carried his designs into execution himself, by beating the enemy and conquering vast provinces.

LICHTENSTEIN.

Oh ! no ; the delirium is not mine, but appertains to the public, by whom prince Eugene is reproached with having never been able to give a circumstantial account of his success to the council of war.

MARLBOROUGH (*to EUGENE.*)

You are accused then of not having been a good secretary. I imagined that it was for heroes to perform grand actions, the care of collecting the minutiae of which they left to those who had nothing better to do.

EUGENE.

True it is, I took good care not to be prolix in my narratives. It was sufficient for me to send

send the result of my operations to my enemies, who were all collected in this council of war. Had I been still more laconic, in my style, my campaigns would but have been the more fortunate.

MARLBOROUGH.

I acted after the same manner with queen Ann, and her parliament. Our masters were in reality automata. What more was necessary than summarily to inform them of the effect of our operations? They neither could judge of our intentions, of our plans, nor of the reasons we might have to prefer one enterprize to another.

LICHTENSTEIN.

I do not relate my own opinion, I only render you an account of the manner in which the public think, and tell you the news. But you, my lord, are in a predicament similar to that of prince Eugene. Were I to repeat the terms in which you are spoken of, in England, I am afraid you would be very angry.

MARLBOROUGH.

No, no; speak. After what I have heard, nothing you can say will astonish me.

LICHTEN-

LICHTENSTEIN.

I blush while I tell you that men, who do not so much as know what a company is, much less a battalion, affirm you were not a great general; that you were indebted for all your fame to Cadogan; that you were rather an artful politician than a great commander; and that you were capable of setting every engine of intrigue in motion, in parliament, to perpetuate the war, and thus authorise you to accumulate by pillage the considerable sums which you amassed.

MARLBOROUGH.

Mine was a singular case. I was mortal, and the envy of my enemies has survived me. Yes, I own I employed Cadogan as an able man, whom I chose to assist me in my labours. Where is the individual who himself is able to conduct an army? Assistants are requisite. The more a general is aided the more prosperous will be his conduct. I had my friends, and even a party in parliament. Such were necessary, or intestine misintelligence and the want of aid would have ruined us; and all our grand projects would have failed in execution. What if I made some money by granting passports?* It was in the enemy's

* *Sauve-gardes.* It is probable the king alludes to the charge

enemy's country. It was lawful retribution, due to every commander in chief; any other person in my place would have done as much, and perhaps more.

EUGENE.

What! Cannot Höchstett, Ramillies, Oudenarde, and Malplaquet, serve as a shield to protect the name of this great man; and has not victory itself been able to defend him against the despicable shafts of envy? What would have been the part that England would have acted deprived of this true hero, who supported and rendered her respectable, and who would have carried her grandeur to its utmost height, had it not been for the miserable intrigues of women, by which France profited to procure his disgrace. Louis XIV. would have been ruined, had the influence of Marlborough been supported but two years longer.

LICHTENSTEIN.

I allow it; queen Ann without Marlborough, and Charles VI. unaided by Eugene, would have acted very inferior parts. To you alone

charge against Marlborough on the article for contingencies. T.

were

were those two sovereigns indebted for the respect in which they were held and their glory. In this rational people are agreed ; but we must reckon a thousand fools, and a hundred madmen, for one man of sense to be found in the world. You therefore ought not to be astonished at the strange judgments which have been passed upon you by posterity.

EUGENE.

It must be confessed we are unfortunate. Since there is but one opinion concerning Alexander, Cæsar, Scipio, and Paulus Erilius, wherefore, after having performed acts so great, should the public thus tarnish and rend our reputation, while the fame of the former is constantly maintained, and every panegyrist labours to find a parallel between these ancient heroes and the man he means to honour ?

LICHTENSTEIN.

Fortunately for them, there were no Encyclopedists in the age in which they lived.

MARLBOROUGH.

Encyclopedist ! What is that ? What a barbarous sound ! Is it the name of some savage Iroquois ? I never heard it before.

LICHTENSTEIN.

That I can readily believe; there were no such beings in your time. The Encyclopedists are a set of self-called philosophers, who have arisen in the present age, and who believe themselves superior to all antiquity can produce. To the effrontery of the Cynics they add the noble impudence of venting all the paradoxes which happen to enter their imaginations. They proclaim themselves mathematicians, and affirm that those who have not studied geometry reason falsely: consequently, that they alone are capable of right reason. Their common discourse is loaded with scientific terms. Thus, for example, they will say that such or such laws have sagely been made in the inverse ratio of the square of the distances; that such a kingdom, which shall be about to form an alliance with another kingdom, feels itself drawn by the force of attraction, and that the two nations will soon be assimilated. If it be proposed to take a walk, the problem of the curve is first to be resolved. Should they be attacked by nephritic pains, they must cure themselves according to the rules of hydrostatics. When a flea bites them, they are incommoded by a being infinitely small, of the first order. Should they happen to fall, they have

have lost the center of gravity ; and should any journalist be audacious enough to attack them, they drown him in a deluge of ink and abuse ; for treason against philosophy is a crime unpardonable.

EUGENE.

But what connection is there between these madmen and our renown, or the judgment which is pronounced upon us ?

LICHTENSTEIN.

Much more than you imagine ; for they exclaim against all the sciences, their own calculations only excepted. Poetry is a frivolous art, from which every thing fabulous must be banished. A poet ought not to rhyme with energy, except it be equations in algebra. Those who tread the paths of history must walk backward, and must begin with the present age in order to understand the state of the world before the deluge. Governments are all to be changed. France is to become a republic, and a mathematician is to be her legislator ; while these governing mathematicians are to render all the operations of the new republic subject to and have them examined by the doctrine of infinites. This republic is to maintain continual peace, and to exist without an army.

MARLBOROUGH.

Every thing I have heard is indeed admirable. But pray are not these Encyclopedists somewhat infected with the visions of the primitive Christians, the Quakers, and the Pennsylvanians?

LICHTENSTEIN.

You would offend them highly were you to tell them so. They pique themselves on being originals.

EUGENE.

If I am not deceived, this perpetual peace was the dream of one Abbé de St. Pierre, who, in my time, was not a little ridiculed.

LICHTENSTEIN.

They have then raised him from the grave of oblivion, for they all affect to hold war in holy horror.

EUGENE.

It must be confessed that war is an evil, but an evil which cannot be prevented, because there is no tribunal that can decide the disputes of sovereigns.

LICHTENSTEIN.

Although they hate armies, and generals who
VOL. V. E render

render themselves famous, this does not prevent them from making wordy war, and uttering abuse exceedingly worthy of Billingsgate. Had they troops, there can be no doubt but they would march to fight each other.

MARLBOROUGH.

There is less harm in the shedding of ink than in the shedding of blood; yet abusive language is worse than wounds.

LICHTENSTEIN.

With respect to the military art, I dare not mention, in the presence of heroes so great, how much they endeavour to debase it, nor repeat the terms in which they speak.

MARLBOROUGH.

Fear nothing; since their system is to pull down, we must necessarily come in for a part, during the universal conflict.

LICHTENSTEIN.

These gentlemen pretend you were only the chiefs of robbers, whom tyrants intrusted with mercenary executioners, that in their name you might commit the most horrid crimes, on the most inoffensive people.

EUGENE.

EUGENE.

This is the language of drunken carmen. Socrates, Aristotle, Gassendi, and Bayle, did not express themselves thus.

LICHTENSTEIN.

Far from being drunk, they often fast. Their purse is not sufficiently full to allow them to be guilty of excess. According to them, these fine propositions are called philosophic freedoms. It is necessary to think aloud ; every truth ought to be spoken : and, as they imagine themselves to be the sole depositaries of truth, they suppose they may boldly utter every extravagance they shall happen to conceive, and be certain of meeting applause.

MARLBOROUGH.

From what you tell us, I suppose there are no more mad-houses in Europe. If any yet remain, my opinion is these gentlemen ought to be sent to them, that they might become the legislators of madmen like themselves.

EUGENE.

Were my advice followed, they should be suffered to govern some province which merited

chastisement, they would then, from experience, after having reversed all order, be taught their own ignorance. It is easy to criticise, difficult to perform ; and particularly so since men pretend to speak on subjects they do not understand, and persist to expose themselves by speaking foolishly.

LICHTENSTEIN.

The presumptuous never imagine themselves in the wrong. According to their principles, the sage is never deceived ; he alone is enlightened ; from him ought the light to issue which is to disperse the gloomy vapours that envelope the vulgar, the foolish, and the blind. Heaven only knows how they are to be enlightened. At one time it is by demonstrating the origin of prejudices ; at another by a book on the understanding * ; and at a third by the system of nature †. There is no end to all this. A number of idlers, either from affectation or fashion, call themselves their disciples, affect to imitate them, and to erect themselves the sub-preceptors

* *Sur l'Esprit* ; by Helvetius. T.

† *Système de la Nature*. A book criticised in a future essay, by the king, the author of which is said either to be unknown or known only to a few ; though the name of Mirabaud was affixed to the work. T.

of the human race ; and, as it is much more easy to vent abuse than to allege reasons, it is the mode with the scholars of this school to declaim indecently, on every opportunity, against military men.

EUGENE.

There is no fool who cannot find one more foolish than himself for his admirer. But do soldiers suffer such abuse to pass unresented ?

LICHTENSTEIN.

They permit the curs to bark, and continue to act as they think proper.

MARLBOROUGH.

Wherefore all this rage against the most noble of professions ; against that under the shelter of which every other may be peacefully exercised ?

LICHTENSTEIN.

As they are themselves exceedingly ignorant of the art of war, they imagine that by decrying they may render that art contemptible. But, as I have before said, they exclaim generally against all the sciences, and raise up mathematics alone on their ruin ; that they may annihilate all fame they cannot acquire, and which does not concentrate personally in themselves.

MARLBOROUGH.

Yet we neither despised philosophy, mathematics, nor the belles lettres ; we were very well contented to acquire renown in our own profession.

EUGENE.

I did more : I protected all the learned at Vienna, and even distinguished them at a time when they were noticed by no one.

LICHTENSTEIN.

That I can well believe ; for you were truly great men ; and these self-called philosophers are little better than rabble, who from vanity always wish to render themselves conspicuous. This however does not prevent the frequent repetition of the same abuse from being injurious to the memory of great men. It is supposed that to reason boldly, right or wrong, is to be a philosopher ; and that he who advances the most paradoxes is to carry the palm. How often have I heard their ridiculous assertions condemn your greatest acts, and treat you like men who had usurped renown in an age of ignorance, which was destitute of men capable of appreciating merit !

MARLBOROUGH.

MARLBOROUGH.

Our age an age of ignorance ! I can forbear no longer.

LICHTENSTEIN.

The present is the age of philosophy.

EUGENE.

In which your armies are vanquished ; you lose provinces, and yet imagine yourselves superior to the past. Your Encyclopedists may talk as they please, but I shall prefer our age of ignorance to their age of philosophy.

MARLBOROUGH.

Is England in like manner infected by your Encyclopedists ?

LICHTENSTEIN.

Some are found there, but not so many as in France.

MARLBOROUGH.

And has France any generals ? — How can she have any if they are thus calumniated ?

LICHTENSTEIN.

This is the reason that they deserve calumny. They are —

MARLBOROUGH.

Has England produced any grand general who has been my successor?

LICHTENSTEIN.

The duke of Cumberland.

MARLBOROUGH.

How many battles did he win?

LICHTENSTEIN.

He was beaten at Fontenoy, at Hafstenbeck, and was in danger of being taken, with his whole army, at Stade.

MARLBOROUGH.

Certainly, prince, you are laughing at us. How! A man beaten like Daun, and another disgraced like Cumberland, are such to be preferred to us?

LICHTENSTEIN.

Not them alone, there are many others, who indeed have been in the field, but who never have commanded in chief, who will neither cede to you nor Cæsar. These half-grown heroes have nobly dared to vaunt their own exploits, and their presumption has been sufficiently great

to make the disease epidemical ; so that the public presage nothing but their future great deeds.

MARLBOROUGH.

To what purpose then were all our labours,
all our cares, all our troubles ?

EUGENE.

Vanity of vanities ! The vanity of fame !



D I A L O G U E

B E T W E E N T H E

D U K E D E C H O I S E U L ,

C O U N T S T R U E N S E E ,

A N D

S O C R A T E S .

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THE duke de Choiseul, since his exile, may, in a civil capacity, be considered as dead; and count Struensee may be supposed the same, by the sentence which will be pronounced. Nothing therefore prevents an author, who is but little scrupulous concerning chronology, to treat them as persons long dead, and to transport them into imaginary abodes, where shades converse together, according to the Pagan, the Christian, and the Mahometan mythology, and according to that of almost all nations on earth.

D I A L O G U E

BETWEEN THE

DUKE DE CHOISEUL, COUNT STRUENSEE,
AND SOCRATES.

CHOISEUL.

SAY what you please, nothing can console me now that I find I am no longer at Verfailles, no longer the governor of a kingdom, and no longer am to hear myself mentioned. It is really vexatious to be a ghost.

SOCRATES.

Not more so than to be any thing else. What madness possesses thee? Why wish to govern a nation that will not be governed by thee? Or wherefore dost thou complain of being subjected to the eternal laws of nature, like every other mortal?

CHOISEUL.

CHOISEUL.

I was not so much hated in that kingdom as you may imagine. Actually king of France, I had the secret of attaching many persons to myself, by the services I rendered them, the places I had to bestow, and by largesses which cost me nothing. My loss has been regretted. All France did not contain a man who equalled me in genius. What a part did I enact ! I excited troubles in Europe as I pleased : I surpassed Richelieu and Mazarin.

SOCRATES.

Yes, in cabals, in malignant intrigues, and in knavish acts ; for thou wert by trade a great knave. But art thou informed that the fame of such as thee is envied by no one ? Virtuous men detest it. Their decision is finally conclusive with the public, and they dictate the sentence of posterity. Thou wilt never pass for any thing more in history than a famous juggler, a gunpowder squib, which blazes for a moment, and which is as hastily extinguished in its own smoke.

CHOISEUL.

You are not in the best of tempers, Mr. Socrates, or you could not avoid approving my administration.

administration. The French monarchy, and the city of Athens, sir, are two very different things.

SOCRATES.

Thou believest thyself still to be at Versailles, with thy wife, I mean to say thy sister, madame de Grammont; surrounded by servile flatterers; where falsehood assuming the guise of politeness was prodigal of lies; where some, dreading thy power, and others from vile motives of interest, offered up their incense, and read panegyrics on thy fooleries. But here are no patrons, no protectors; no one is flattered, but every one speaks the truth.

CHOISEUL.

What a horrid country! It is really very vexatious that a courtier from Versailles (what do I say?) that a minister who was king should live among such silly rustics.—But what do I behold? What object have they sent hither from the other world? What kind of an animal is this without a head? Curse me if I do not believe it is Mr. St. Denis—Who art thou, headless man?

STRUENSEE.

I have not the honour of being a saint; nay, I am a heretic. I am come hither without my head

head because they are absolutely in want of mine, in the country where they cut it off, for they have no other.

CHOISEUL.

The French are not so brutal. Law exercises its rigour there only on the vulgar, and not on the great. They do not cut off our heads. But what part hast thou played, and why hast thou been treated thus?

STRUENSEE.

I am count Struensee, and one of those people who are indebted for every thing to their personal merit. I was the author of my own fortune. I was a physician in Holstein, when the monarch of Iceland, Norway, Holstein, Denmark, and the north, came to Kiel. He was eaten up with disease, and I fortunately effected a cure. I gained his favour; and, still more, that of the queen, who did not look on me with indifferent eyes. I became prime minister, and wished to be king. I thought like Pompey, and would suffer no equal. I found means to captivate my sovereign, and, that I might maintain him in subjection, I stupefied him by administering opium as a medicine. The queen and I afterward were determined to make

make ourselves regents of the kingdom. Whoever sees himself the second endeavours to be the first. I procured myself a powerful party, who were on the point of declaring the monarch incapable of government ; but I was unexpectedly arrested, by night, and thrown into prison. These Danes, who know nothing of Machiavel, could not understand the sublime part of my conduct ; and, after having effectively been king, they took off my head.—But pray who are you, who question me ?

CHOISEUL.

I am the famous duke de Choiseul, formerly king of France, as you have been of Denmark. I was the sole fabricator of my fortune. My intrigues placed me beside, or upon, the throne, as you please, round which I shed the beams of splendor. I am the author of the famous family compact, by which I induced Spain to sacrifice her fleet, and a part of her American possessions, that she might have the honour of assisting France, then at bay, while she made war on the English in Germany, and was beaten both by sea and land. By my efforts, I made the best peace possible, considering the situation of the kingdom, and—

SOCRATES.

That was the only wise action of thy whole life.

CHOISEUL.

I am flattered to find there is one at least which you approve. I afterward expelled the Jesuits from France; because, while ambassador at Rome, I quarrelled with their general.

SOCRATES.

That vile brood did not exist in my time; but the ghosts that have come hither have told me they are sophists, armed with daggers and poison. Pray was not this good count one of their sect?

STRUENSEE.

No; I am of the sect of Cromwell, of Cæsar Borgia, and of Catiline.—But pray go on, my lord, that I may gain instruction.

CHOISEUL.

After this great act, I seized on Avignon, and drove away the pope, that I might eternally annex its district to the kingdom of France. To this I added Corsica, which, by a trick of leger-demain, I procured from the Genoese.

SOCRATES.

SOCRATES.

So, thou art a conqueror?

CHOISEUL.

I made these conquests sitting in my cabinet ; and while indulging in pleasures, yielding to dissipation, and rolling in voluptuousness, I disturbed all Europe ; for, the more other powers were disturbed, the better might France maintain herself in peace. Wars, and former ill-administration, had so exhausted our finances that credit was lost, and bankruptcy almost inevitable.

SOCRATES.

What means didst thou take to disturb Europe ?

CHOISEUL.

More subtle artifices, tricks more adroit and sublime, never were imagined. First, I placed great sums in the funds of the English East India company, under fictitious names. My agents, who raised or lowered the price of stock at pleasure, puzzled the whole world, and occasioned quarrels among the East India directors ; while I, by my cunning manœuvres, made the Mogul nabobs revolt against England. War broke out between them, and the company was in

great danger of being ruined. I thought I should have expired with joy.

SOCRATES.

Kind soul!

CHOISEUL.

In other parts, I excited the people of Neufchâtel to rebel against the king of Prussia, that his turbulent spirit might find employment at home. Not satisfied with so many affairs, which I the charioteer drove abreast, as the Romans did the Quadriga, by the aid of large sums distributed in the Divan, I obliged the Turks to declare war against the Russians. I raised up a confederation in Poland, to increase the difficulties of Catharine ; and endeavoured to incite the Swedes to make war on her, that such a diversion might relieve the Porte, which was sinking under the power of Russia. I should even have persuaded the empress queen to second Mustapha, had I not myself been ruined by my enemies.

STRUENSEE.

What a pity it is that so many fine projects were not put in execution !

CHOISEUL.

CHOISEUL.

It is indeed. I should have made such a noise in the world, and should have caballed so effectually, that all Europe would have spoken only of me.

SOCRATES.

Dost thou remember Erostratus, who, that he might acquire a name, burnt the Ephesian temple?

CHOISEUL.

Pshaw! He was only an incendiary; I was a great man. I acted the part of Providence on our globe; I regulated all, yet no one could perceive the means I employed. The blow was seen but not the hand that gave the blow.

SOCRATES.

Madman! Darest thou compare thyself to Providence; thy arts to the All Wise; and thy crimes to the Archetype of virtue?

CHOISEUL.

Yes, Mr. Socrates, I dare. Be it known to your bald-pate that state artifice is no crime, and that whatever acquires glory is great. Recollect, if you please, that the Greeks have

placed men who were my inferiors among their demi-gods.

SOCRATES.

The man is subject to fits of phrenzy, and his madness is at the height. Go, consult Hippocrates; yonder he stands; he will cure thy delirium.

CHOISEUL.

Count Struensee is here at hand, and he would perform this office for him, were there any necessity; but, observe, without the use of opium. This philosopher, with his taciturnity, deems that to be madness which is no more than a noble pride, and the just confidence which every great man ought to place in himself.

STRUENSEE.

You have no need of medical aid; you merit the greatest praises. Machiavel would have decreed you the laurel for your politics. But how did it happen that you were exiled?

CHOISEUL.

The chancellor, a more artful knave than myself, aided by a favourite prostitute, in whose presence my pride would not deign to bend, procured my banishment.

STRUENSEE.

STRUENSEE.

But, after the fine things you had so fortunately performed, what pretext could they allege for such an act?

CHOISEUL.

The exhausted state of the finances. Louis felt some dislike to see himself the author of a general bankruptcy. He wished affairs might linger in the same train, that he might leave the horror in which the public would hold such an event as a part of the inheritance of his grandson. I was therefore accused of having been prodigal of the public money, during my reign. True it is, I had a contempt for such base metal. I made presents. I was born with the noble sentiments of a monarch, whose duty it is to be generous, and even prodigal.

SOCRATES.

Upon my word, thou wert the prince of madmen, thus to hasten the ruin of a kingdom.

CHOISEUL.

My mind was addicted to the grand, and there can be no doubt but it would be a species of grandeur for a monarchy like France to be-

come bankrupt. It is not a merchant who fails; millions are interested. The event is trumpeted abroad; some are struck, others astonished, and the fortunes of multitudes in a moment are ruined.—Oh! what a denouement!

SOCRATES.

Villain!

CHOISEUL.

Suffer me to inform you, Mr. Philosopher, that he who governs a nation must not have a very scrupulous conscience.

SOCRATES.

He who can render millions of people wretched must have the ferocity of the tiger, and a heart of adamant.

CHOISEUL.

With such inclinations, you once might shine in the Ceramicus, but you would have made a very poor prime minister.

STRUENSEE.

There can be no doubt but that a vast genius signalizes itself by daring acts; it seeks novelty, and executes things unexampled, leaving petty scruples

scruples to old women, and marches immediately toward the goal, without troubling itself concerning the paths that lead thither. It is not every body who is capable of understanding our merit, and philosophers still less than others. Yet it somehow generally happens that we fall victims to the intrigues of the court.

CHOISEUL.

That was precisely the manner in which I was ruined. Merit at the court of France was incapable of withstanding the whims of a prostitute. She too was prompted by a banded pendant. What indeed could she do more than blow up embers which were almost extinct, in a king who had, all his life, been the slave of women?

STRUENSEE.

Had you but employed opium, to stupify your sovereign, such intrigues would have been ineffectual, and you would still have been minister; or rather monarch; for he who has power, and who acts, is in reality master; and he who suffers another to act is, at best, no more than his slave.

CHOISEUL.

There was no need of opium. Nature had done that for my master which physic did for yours.

SOCRATES

SOCRATES.

Thou hast acted very wisely with thy opium, wretched apostate of Hippocrates ! It has not prevented thy being imprisoned and punished, though more mildly indeed than thou hast merited to be.

STRUENSEE.

That was a stroke of fate, which could not be foreseen. What a catastrophe ! To be so displaced ! And by whom too !

SOCRATES.

Not of fate, but the result of eternal justice, which will not suffer all who are criminal to be fortunate, and which has decreed that some shall be punished, as an example to the remainder.

CHOISEUL.

I nevertheless flatter myself you will be sorry for my disgrace; for, had my reign continued, I should have astonished all Europe, by the great things to which my genius would have given birth and execution.

SOCRATES.

Thou wouldest have been guilty of more splendid follies. If there be any hospital for lunatics,

lunatics, in Europe, there shouldst thou have been confined. As for this Dane, the torments of Ixion and Prometheus would have been insufficient to punish his ingratitude to his master, and the guilt in which he was involved by his unbridled ambition.

CHOISEUL.

And is this the renown I expected!

STRUENSEE.

Is this the fame which my fancy promised !

SOCRATES.

Wretches, begone ! Choose an abode distant from mine. Seek associates with Catiline and Cromwell, and do not infect the haunts of sages, by your impure presence.

CHOISEUL.

Let us leave this reasoner; I am weary of his impertinence.

STRUENSEE.

Let us quit this gloomy moralist. But which way shall we go ? I will seek my countrymen, the Germans, and console myself for my misfortunes in company with Wallenstein. Farewell, monarch without a kingdom.

CHOISEUL.

CHOISEUL.

And I will associate with the French, will join company with Pepin, the mayor of the palace. Adieu, minister without a head.

D I A L O G U E

BETWEEN

MARCUS AURELIUS

AND A

RECOLLET FRIAR.



D I A L O G U E

B E T W E E N

M A R C U S A U R E L I U S

A N D A

R E C O L L E T F R I A R.

F R I A R.

W H A T is it I behold in our church!—
A ghost!—Quick! Some holy water
and a sprinkler!

M A R C U S A U R E L I U S.

What are you about, with your lustral water?
Oh! I suppose you are one of the priests of Ju-
piter. Permit me to speak a word to you.

F R I A R.

I a priest of Jupiter! Oh, Oh, there can be
no doubt; this is one of the damned, or the devil
himself!

MARCUS AURELIUS.

I do not understand you. What is a devil ?

FRIAR.

Avaunt, Satan ! Take me not away, I am in a state of mortal sin.

MARCUS AURELIUS.

What do you mean by Satan ? What is a mortal sin ?

FRIAR.

This ghost is very ignorant ! St. Francis have mercy on me ! Who art thou, friend ?

MARCUS AURELIUS.

I am Marcus Aurelius, I am returned to contemplate Rome, which loved me, and which I once loved ; the capital where I triumphed, disdaining triumph ; the country that I rendered happy. But I no longer know Rome ; I have revisited the pillar which was erected to my memory, and I cannot find the statue of the sage Antoninus, my father. It is a different countenance.

FRIAR.

That I readily believe, Mr. damned soul. Sixtus V. again raised your pillar, but he placed

the statue of a man upon it who was superior both to you and your father.

MARCUS AURELIUS.

That it was easy to be superior to me I have always believed; but I have also believed it was difficult to be superior to my father. My filial piety has deceived me: all men are subject to error. But why do you call me a damned soul?

FRIAR.

Because so you are. Was it not you that persecuted people to whom you had so many obligations, and who brought down rain from heaven for you to vanquish your enemies?

MARCUS AURELIUS.

Alas! I was far from persecuting any one. I gave thanks to Providence for the fortunate storm that happened to arise at the moment when my troops were dying with thirst, but I never before heard of my obligation to the people you mention, for having raised that storm. I assure you I am not damned. I did too much good to mankind for the divine Essence, to which I have always endeavoured to conform myself, to wish to do me evil. But permit me, sir, to

ask you who you are, who appear to me to be so ill tempered?

FRIAR.

It is very evident you have come a great way, since you do not know friar Fulgentius, the famous recollect, the inhabitant of the capitol, who sometimes speaks to the pope as familiarly as I now speak to you. Cardinals come to visit my cell. I am confessor to the duchess of Poli. The whole world knows who I am.

MARCUS AURELIUS.

Friar Fulgentius at the capitol! Things appear indeed to have undergone some change. Pray be kind enough to inform me where is the palace of the emperor, my successor. Is it still on mount Palatine? For to say the truth, I no longer know my own country.

FRIAR.

Pshaw! Good man, you talk extravagantly. However if you please I will shew you mount Cavallo, you shall kiss the feet of the holy father, and I will procure you some indulgences, of which, if I am not mistaken, you have great need.

MARCUS AURELIUS.

First grant me your own indulgence, and frankly

frankly tell me—Is there, at present, neither emperor nor Roman empire.?

FRIAR.

Oh ! yes, yes, there is an emperor, and an empire too ; but they are both at the distance of four hundred leagues, at a small city called Vienna, on the Danube. I would advise you to go there in search of your successors, for here you are in danger of being sent to visit the inquisition. I give you notice that the reverend Dominican friars do not understand raillery, and they would treat your Marcus Aureliuses, your Tituses, your Antonines, and your Trajans very ill ; pagans as they were, who never could say their catechism.

MARCUS AURELIUS.

Catechism !—Inquisition !—Dominican friars !—Recollets !—Cardinals !—Popes !—The Roman empire in a small city on the Danube ! This was more than I expected. But I can easily conceive that the things of this earth must have changed their appearance in the space of sixteen hundred years. To contemplate one of the Marcomanni, Quadi, Cimbri, or Teutoni, a Roman emperor, highly excites my curiosity.

FRIAR.

You may indulge that curiosity, and even increase it, whenever you please. You will perhaps be highly astonished when I tell you that a moiety of your empire has been seized on by the Scythians, and that we inhabit the other part; that a priest like myself is the sovereign of Rome; and that I, father Fulgentius, may be monarch in my turn, and distribute benedictions in the same place where you dragged conquered kings at your chariot wheels, and that your successor on the Danube has not a single city of his own, but that there is a priest who is bound to lend him one, on occasion.

MARCUS AURELIUS.

You tell me very strange things. Revolutions so great could not have been effected without great misfortunes. I have ever loved, and now I pity, the human race.

FRIAR.

You are too good. Torrents of blood have been shed, it is true, and a hundred provinces have been ravaged; but this was all requisite, that friar Fulgentius might be able to sleep at his ease in the capitol.

MARCUS

MARCUS AURELIUS.

Rome, the metropolis of the world, is then fallen to decay and misfortune !

FRIAR.

To decay, if you please, but not misfortune; on the contrary, peace reigns there, and the fine arts flourish. The ancient masters of the world, at present, are become music-masters. Instead of sending colonies to England, we now send eunuchs and fiddlers there. We have no more Scipios to rase the walls of another Carthage, but neither have we any more proscriptions. We have bartered glory for repose.

MARCUS AURELIUS.

I endeavoured while living to be a philosopher, and since my death I am really so become. I find that repose is superior to glory; but, from what you have said, I have some reason to suspect that friar Fulgentius is no philosopher.

FRIAR.

How ! I no philosopher ! You are very much mistaken. I have taught philosophy, and, which is still more, theology.

G 3

MARCUS

MARCUS AURELIUS.

Theology! Pray be kind enough to inform me what is theology?

FRIAR.

Is?—Why theology—theology is—is the reason that I am here, and that the emperors are elsewhere. You seem to me to be displeased at my renown, and at the trifling changes which have happened in your empire.

MARCUS AURELIUS.

I adore the decrees of the Eternal. I know we must not murmur against destiny. I admire the vicissitude of earthly affairs; but, since all things are liable to change, and since the Roman empire itself is fallen, the turn of the recollet friars may come.

FRIAR.

I excommunicate you. I am going to say my prayers.

MARCUS AURELIUS.

And I am going to join the Being of Beings.

L O U I S
IN THE
ELYSIAN FIELDS:
A
DIALOGUE OR DRAMA.



L O U I S
IN THE
ELYSIAN FIELDS:

A

DIALOGUE, OR DRAMA.*

CHARON was lately rowing a certain foul over the Styx with which he was unacquainted. He examined the ghost and asked himself—" Is he clown, abbé, pettyfogger, or " king ? Where are his titles, his distinctions, " now he is dead ! "

* This, though called a drama, in the Berlin edition, is rather a dialogue of the dead. It is versified in the original, perhaps to give it a dramatic air ; but, as the English justly think it unnatural to make characters converse in rhyme, an apology for having translated this dialogue in prose can scarcely be necessary.

I

The

The ghost heard him, and replied in a melancholy tone—“ I perceive thou art puzzled, “ Charon, and art desirous I should relate who “ and what I was. Know then, I lately gave “ law to the fine monarchy which the Gauls “ inhabit. I made war, yet was by nature “ pacific. I had much devotion and more lu- “ bricity.”

CHARON.

How ! Art thou Louis the well beloved ?

LOUIS.

I am; for this was the epithet the Parisians gave me, when I was ill, at Mentz, and expected to give up the ghost. The kind souls wept for me before I was dead, and prayed to Saint Dennis in my behalf. At present, being defunct, perhaps they treat my memory with contumely.

CHARON.

What if they do ! They can do thee no harm. It is equal to thee whether they bless or curse. Think rather of the tribunal at which thou art to appear; before Minos, an august judge, who is equally inflexible, severe, and terrible, to the king or to the beggar !

LOUIS.

LOUIS..

I am afraid, friend, thy brain is turned! How may the most christian, the puissant king of France be judged by thy Minos?

CHARON.

Cast away thy pride and haughtiness, and with them thy errors. Thou art but dust and ashes, and shouldest have left the inflated vanity of titles behind thee, on the banks of Acheron.

LOUIS.

Alas! Thy Minos and his rude court do but redouble my regrets for life. What! shall not the respectable progeny of St. Louis here be allowed to keep their rank!

CHARON.

Thy saint, I can assure thee, will be of small service to thee, for he is held in but little esteem in our regions.

LOUIS (*with apprehension*).

Pray has your judge any *lettres de cachet*?

CHARON.

What are those? The phrase is not French!

LOUIS.

Perhaps no lord may have pronounced it, in thy crazy dull vessel; for the invention is but of new date; the result of an effort of the human mind, by which a prince, sovereign in his power and free in his anger, may pronounce an arbitrary sentence, and punish any one of his subjects he shall please. Such is the use of *lettres de cachet*; and, if Minos be provided with any of them, what will become of my frail existence? What have I not to dread!

CHARON.

The *lex talionis* is the most equitable of laws.

LOUIS.

Thou understandest nothing of the art of reigning. Chastisement must be the support of every august empire, though it should happen to be excessive.

CHARON.

Minos therefore ought thus to act toward thee, for he is here as great as a king. But dost thou not see that my boat has reached those fatal shores which never may be repassed, by the dead? Thou art soon to be introduced to the most

most equitable of judges. Courage, my friend, courage ! Come on ! Zounds, man, courage !

Louis steps on shore, and hears the barking of Cerberus. He beholds the monster with horror, and hastily pursues his way. The most christian king is in a cold sweat, and the old boatman follows hollowing after him, " Wilt " thou not pay me my fare ? And am I to be " cheated by so great a monarch ? "

The good Louis with lengthened visage replies, " I grant thee a pension, Charon, which " shall be paid thee by my farmers general."

" I will have none of your pensions," replied Charon; " I want ready money ". Louis, having some fine diamonds on his fingers, presents from his mistresses, such as kings often wear, took one of these rings and gave it the boatman, who seized it without being twice bidding. Louis left him and ran with all speed, heavy as he was, diseased and bloated, till he came to the place where Minos sat, the judge alike of the coward and the hero.

The king shuddered at the aspect of the formidable president, and his coadjutors. Dreadful destiny ! exclaimed he. What if he should condemn me for errors at which my good Parisians did but laugh ! If so, this will even be worse than that scene, so insulting to my morals,

rals, which was publicly exhibited by my confessors *.

Thousands of the dead were of the audience. They had hastily been sent thither, each as it arrived, and Minos soon learned to know them individually, and pronounced sentence on each. Some of them, as they departed, mournfully lamented their fate; others blessed their judge.

Louis at length advanced among the crowd. Minos, with a pensive and lowering brow, had perceived him at a distance, made a signal, and called him by his name—“ Hast thou not lately “ been king of the Gauls ? ” said Minos— “ Yes, my lord,” replied Louis. “ Under the “ guardianship of others, in my feeble youth, “ Orleans, Bourbon, and Fleuri, on beds of “ lilies taught me the art to reign.”

MINOS.

And wert thou then held in grey-bearded
pupillage ?

LOUIS.

No, my lord ; when ripened into manhood,
I became a potent hunter.

* See Part V. page, 102. T.

MINOS.

MINOS.

And wert thou not fond of thy leman*?

LOUIS.

The word, my lord, is now grown obsolete. It was once very common among the vulgar; but the expression is low, and is for ever banished the lips of courtiers.

MINOS.

We will not dispute about a word, let us speak of the thing. It is said that, since the death of Francis I. thou wert the most gallant of kings; and that thou hast distributed horns among thy courtiers, without robbing the heads of thy stags.

LOUIS.

These pleasures are so sweet, and so short, and our time upon earth so limited, that, instead of being envied their enjoyment, man ought to be pitied for the evils he suffers.

MINOS.

Who procured thee Pompadour, and du Barry; who both were common, in Paris, be-

* *La Paillardise.* T.

fore

fore they were dignified by thee, and placed beside thee, on the throne ?

LOUIS.

Alas ! now death has robbed me of all, am I farther here to be insulted ?

MINOS.

Truth, Louis, is no insult. Formerly, when possessed of the sceptre, and vainly worshipped by parasites, thou wert unworthily flattered. But here, in these Elysian fields, truth appears without disguise. Here courtiers and parasites are unknown. It is rumoured in these parts that thy counterfeit queens partook of thy power, and that by following their advice thou wert capricious in thy conduct, to the unhappiness of thy kingdom. This was ill done, but thy heart was good; therefore, Louis, thou art pardoned. We can distinguish good from evil, and are the friends of equity. Weakness is not guilt. Thou appearest to have been born for private and for social life, hence thy name will never be cited among those of great kings. Amid these bowers, thou mayest wander in peace, fearless of punishment; and, if thou wert addicted to gaping in the other world, on the banks

banks of yonder river, my son, thou mayest gape
thy fill, or figh and love.

He spoke and departed, and here the audience closed. Louis bowed in obedience, but was vexed and dissatisfied at heart. Yet had he good reason, in despite of his self-sufficiency, to bless the mildness of his sentence.

Immediately departing from the court, he enquires which is the happy abode where his beloved French assemble; and is answered—“ This way; follow yonder path.”—The king hastily pursued the road that was shewn him, and perceived a delightful meadow, interspersed with flowers, shrubs, and trees, where beneath many an antique cypres he thought he beheld transparent shades; goblins, spectres, or manes; the ghosts most famous among the deceased French.

Hither Louis diligently repaired, out of the pure love he bore to the descendants of the Gauls. A high rock overlooked the blest abode, and here Louis perceived the famous Richelieu, apart, and absorbed in meditation.

“ On what art thou dreaming?” said Louis.
“ Being dead, thou art incapable of future gran-
“ deur. Art thou still desirous of inventing a
“ system? Or can a ghost here make inno-
“ vation?”

RICHELIEU.

Begone, trifler! Disturb me not, now while my mind is revolving on the sublimest of systems. I will rule the world by logic; and when, hereafter, I shall have completed my work, each shall exclaim—"Behold the masterpiece of perfection!"

LOUIS.

Having once disturbed the earth, dost thou mean likewise to excite revolutions in hell?

RICHELIEU.

Didst thou know, too phlegmatic monarch, the subject that employs my politics, stupefied and astonished thou wouldest admiring stand!

LOUIS.

How canst thou expect a stranger can divine the subject on which thy comprehensive mind now ruminates? But we believe, and are convinced, that in this asylum, where nothing disturbs and in which nothing can augment thy fortune, thy great labours are but superfluous cares.

RICHELIEU.

Not so, sir—The event in question—

LOUIS.

LOUIS.

In which thou art but little interested—

RICHELIEU.

Will subjugate the vast domains of heaven, hell, and all that exists in the expanse of space, to the will of Jove.

Knowest thou not that, powerful as he is, the thunderer dependson Fate? A slave in effect, free only in appearance. It is my purpose to constrain Destiny to submit to his resistless authority. I, who rendered France a monarchy, cannot patiently behold a God who is not in all things despotic.

LOUIS.

What, here, among the dead, does thy agitated mind still continue to busy itself with politics? But, ghost as thou art, thou couldest not exist, did not thy restless spirit embroil principalities and powers.

RICHELIEU.

The eternal and immutable laws of Heaven have determined that each of the shades, inhabiting these plains, should for ever remain similar to itself; so unconquerable is the ruling passion of man. The warrior here again shall fight his battles; the Bacchanalian quaff nocturnal

H 2 draughts;

draughts ; and the statesman keep his rank. The lover shall wander through our groves, seeking his mistress, his soul's delight !

LOUIS.

Would, sir, your descendant were present, the high priest of love, my friend Richelieu, that my immediate wants might in him find resource ; for shame is unknown, among the dead. Your eminence is so enamoured of projects that I could wish you would invent one, to gratify my desires. I could not doubt of its efficacy. Teach me where I may seek another Barry, or a Pompadour. I should soon forget my earthly grandeurs, power, empire, and glory, could I but indulge my love.

RICHELIEU.

This very day, O king, your wish shall be accomplished. Here are beauteous coquettes, who are far from cruel. You will find them in the district where, in peace, reigns Solomon the wise. Grandeur, splendour, majestic pomp, will astonish you, when you behold his numerous courtiers. There you will feel all the fires of love, and a word from me will gain you admission to the salacious monarch. A thousand prostitutes are assembled in his seraglio. Sage he was,

was, but a Judean sage; therefore, from a flock so numerous, if he understand good manners, he may select you some young and tender flower, although perhaps some short time gathered. But you, great king, seek amusement only in love. The most delicate are the soonest bruised; but you are robust, and are accustomed to the lowest order of courtezans. Go, and be fortunate. He who is born a king is not born to meet refusal.

Saint Louis, who was desired to be his conductor, stood astonished at the new part he had to act. What, was he become a civil pander! What ancient knight, but at beholding him, must have laughed? The saint feared lest his backsliding from a state of grace, and his new employment, might be of future injury to his holiday and calendar honours. All the sermons preached in his praise excited regret in his heart; though true it was he was no martyr.

Sill however they continued their way, gliding through the groves. Louis the well-beloved said—“ I never could have believed that, when “ dead, I might continue to indulge in those “ amorous sports which formerly to me were so “ seductive.”

The saint with swelling heart replied—“ All “ is here on the decline! Minos is grown lan- “ quid! An old and doating judge! Repentant

“ as I am, and devout, it is my desire to find
“ one more severe, more violent, and such as
“ the guilty ought to find.”

“ And wherefore thus malignant?” replied his brother king. “ Or why punish foibles thus
“ amiable? If chastisement were rigorously in-
“ flicted, these changed abodes, no longer to be
“ known, would soon become the haunts of hor-
“ ror; a gloomy and barren desert; waste, de-
“ populate, savage; without a single shade! For
“ where is perfection among mortals to be
“ found? Dead before I beheld the light, you,
“ dear saint, at least so called, and perhaps
“ a saint you were, though much I doubt it,
“ you, while endeavouring to discover pure and
“ perfect virtue, might chance to find among
“ her beauteous charms some impure spot,
“ highly to your regret. And could you wish,
“ cruelly wish, saint as you are, and at the head
“ of your profession, to send all earthly mortals
“ to that impure and bottomless gulph where
“ they must everlastinglly roast in fire unquench-
“ able?”

SAINT LOUIS.

Is this a son of mine?—Oh degenerate race!—
I renounce thee! Place me not among thy
ancestors! Had not Richelieu committed thee
to my care, thee to conduct to the haunts of
wantonness, abhorring thy heretical discourse,
worthy

worthy of thy Encyclopedist subjects, having first blessed and thrice crossed myself, I would have broken my crosier over thy pate!

LOUIS.

How now!—Are we still on catholic ground? Dost thou not perceive that, in this pacific land, all religions mingle; that Jews, Christians, and Turks, with Pagans, live in tranquillity?

SAINT LOUIS.

Oh damnable doctrine; flowing from a cold, an insensible, or a lukewarm heart! It is the duty of a most christian king to be intolerant, if he do not suppose all our books to be fabulous.

LOUIS.

And wherefore? Why must a most christian king have an iron heart?

SAINT LOUIS.

Heaven be praised, we are on the Judean frontiers. I curse, quit thee, and vanish!

Louis unguided approached the palace; and, while he surveyed it, his majesty admired. For Solomon of old, when he built it, prudently made all the groves of Lebanon pay tribute. The structure was of cedar, inlaid with ivory; its circumference was vast. On a large pedi-

ment was exquisitely wrought the loves of dame Ruth, and lady Thamar; and the authentic history of the Hebrews.

The monarch, seated on a throne of gold, was then giving audience to his Jews. His gentleman-usher, who was no blockhead, kept off the thronging multitude, that lately had arrived from London, from Constantinople, from Holland, Poland, and France.

The good Louis, tired of waiting, began to yawn and softly muttered now and then an oath, unable to lose the remembrance of the ceremonious punctilios of former grandeur. But, as he yawned, he at a distance perceived a person whom he thought he knew.

LOUIS.

Yes; certainly it is he!—'Tis Samuel Bernard!—How does it happen, sir, I find you here, among this vile crowd of the circumcised?

BERNARD.

Know, my royal master, that formerly I was deemed, among the French, a greater Jew than any whom you see here admitted to the palace of Solomon. But, Jew or Infidel, I have swallowed shame. Hither am I come in quest of the gold of Ophir. I am crafty, and purchase it at a good market. I run every risk for gain.

LOUIS.

LOUIS.

You are still the same Bernard, I find.

BERNARD.

My love of money is extreme. But say, my king, of what are you here in search? You at the court of Solomon, and among the vulgar! A thing so strange merits well I should enquire.

LOUIS.

Love and pleasure bring me hither. I seek a gentle dame. In a word, I seek to amuse myself with some kind lady, renowned in this venerable Jewish king's old testament.

BERNARD.

That is an article with which he may supply you.

LOUIS.

Dost thou not perceive that these Jews, these lepers, who in the world above were wandering fugitives, are here persons of great respect; and that the monarch concerns himself with them alone? Here I may wait to no good end; and so must wait, or I am deceived.

BERNARD.

Fear no such mishap, my sovereign. I promise you a good reception.

Bernard

Bernard then raising his voice, loudly called,
“ Grandees and kings, listen ! Behold in this
“ august palace one of the descendants of Louis,
“ called the just ! And shall he be suffered to
“ stand among this dirty crew of clippers, coin-
“ ers, and old-clothes men, confounded in the
“ crowd ! He, who formerly was a king, and
“ the Lord’s anointed !”

He spoke, and silence profound ensued ; for such is the common consequence of surprise. At length Solomon, the king, replied—“ This is some idle tale or some mistake.” But Bernard, standing erect, again retorted—“ Not so, my lord. Your splendid court is at this moment honoured by the presence of Louis, the well-beloved ; Louis the most christian ! Here the monarch stands, and him I now present.”

Louis advanced. His noble carriage and superior mien bespoke his rank, and told the spectators he was none of your petty princes, the lord of half an acre. Solomon, with outstretched arms, addressing him, said—“ Happy am I to behold, within my territories, his most christian majesty of France !” Louis replied with gesture unembarrassed ; such as Demosthenes, about to speak, would assume.

Our

Our two great kings, with arms entwined, tenderly embraced; and sincere of heart vowed brotherly love: for their inclinations were the same; though dead they preserved their amorous follies.

To avoid all loss of time, the Frenchman requested the Jerusalemite would shew him his seraglio. "Let me behold it, brother," exclaimed Louis, "and bless me with a sight of its beauties!" "Not quite so fast," replied the Jew. "My good father, of old, was one of the horned; and so made by his son Absalom. I wish not to follow his example, by admitting a stranger king into my seraglio, and not prescribing limits to the warm transports of impatient love."

"But my passions have kept Lent," continued Louis. "It is now three months since I died, and was buried. Pallid as I am, can my ghost here excite suspicions in the jealous?"

"Lent!" replied the Jew, who began to be disturbed; "the longer we fast the more hungry we are. Nor am I unacquainted with the seductive prattle of Frenchmen, so captivating to wives and daughters, so little known in Salem and Betheron, and to women so pleasing, to the disquiet of many a family.

"However,

“ However, you are a stranger; and, to prove
“ to you I understand good breeding, it is my
“ will a beauty should be assigned you; one who
“ is mistress of her art, and of whom my old
“ father erst was madly enamoured; one who
“ knows how to subdue the hearts of kings.
“ Bathsheba is the name by which she is known.
“ She who, among her other famous exploits,
“ occasioned the murder of her husband; one
“ monsieur Uriah.”

LOUIS.

Heavens, what a creature! Oh beauteous gift
of the great Solomon! The royal, and the wife!

SOLOMON.

A gift, brother, not inferior to your beloved
Pompadour. She who involved you in a war,
during which your difficulties—

LOUIS.

Who has informed you of this?—What!
know you that—

SOLOMON.

That the French, so vaunted in history, have
buried their glory on German ground. But
forget we these events, in which chance perhaps
acted a principal part. Take hence thy fair

one; the buxom dame has the art to keep thy flame alive; to saddle and bridle thee; again to please, again to vex, and as oft persuade.

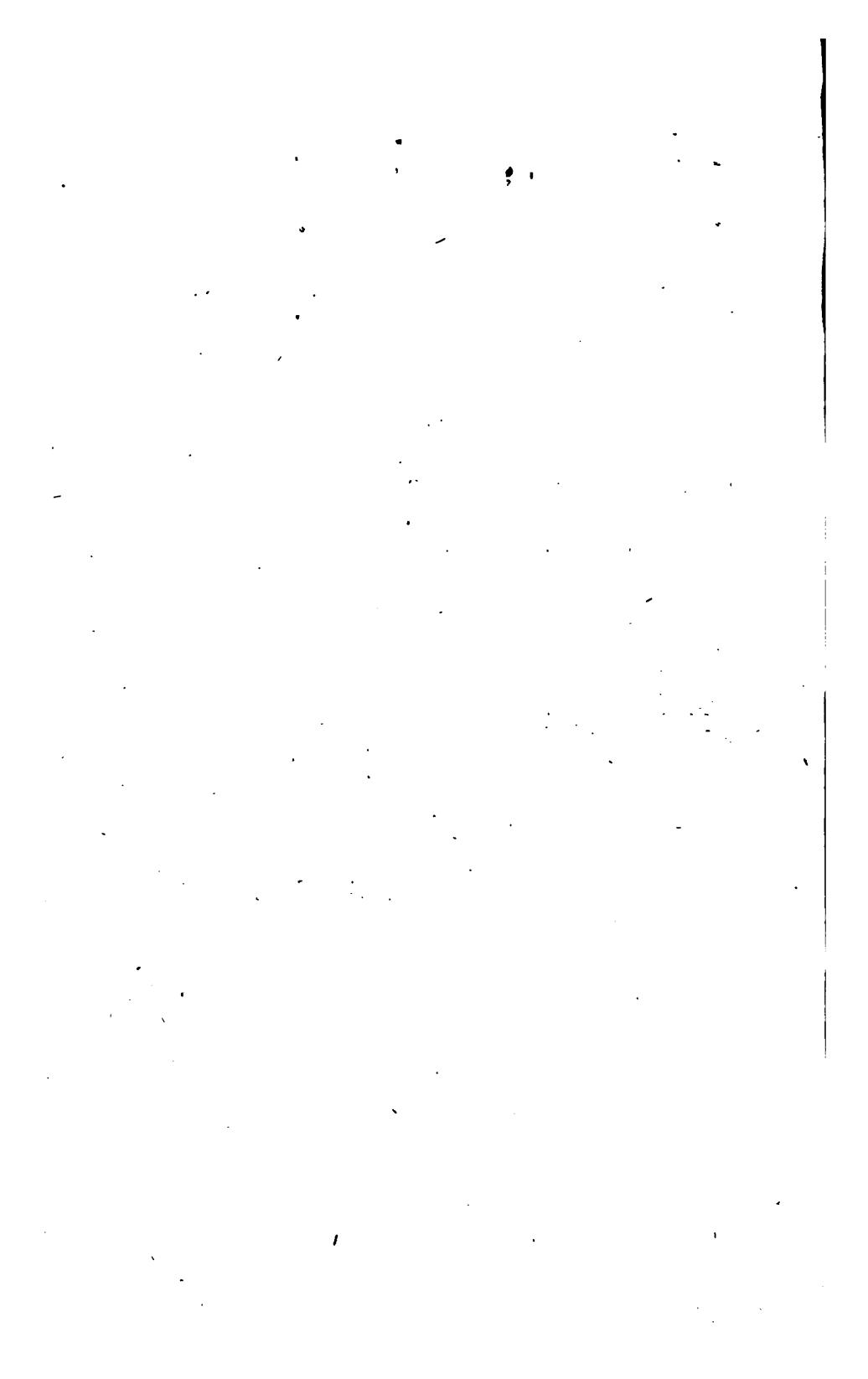
LOUIS.

I see it well—Resistance were vain, were impossible. (*Aside.*) I see he will give me nothing better, so I must be satisfied with what I can get.

Such is the intelligence we have last received, from our couriers from the famous Elysian fields. I will not warrant all the Gazette may affirm. Truth, which we love and cherish, is every where difficult to discover. For the present, reader, let what has been said suffice. Thou hast learned, at least, that the good king of France is not deprived of all enjoyment. Shouldst thou desire to know what may hereafter be his destiny, take patience and wait; thou mayest be informed by the next post.



R E F L E C T I O N S
ON THE
C H A R A C T E R
AND
M I L I T A R Y T A L E N T S
OF
C H A R L E S XII.



R E F L E C T I O N S

ON

C H A R L E S XII.

I HAVE endeavoured for my own information to obtain a just idea of the character and military talents of Charles XII. I estimate his worth neither from the pictures which have been drawn by his panegyrists nor his critics. Ocular witnesses, and memoirs which are by all authors acknowledged to be authentic, have been my guides. We ought to suspect all those particulars and minute relations which we too often find in history. Of a multitude of fictions

and satirical remarks, few things present themselves which are worthy of our notice.

Among those many turbulent spirits who have been devoured by the passion of reigning, those rulers who have sought to render nations happy or to subject them to the yoke of servitude, none deserve to fix our attention except such whose genius was capable of embracing all things, whose vast plans produced great actions, and whose powers of mind created circumstances, as it were, from non-entity, or profited by the most advantageous of those which presented themselves, to effect essential changes, in the political relations which exist between states.

Such was the genius of Cæsar. The services he had rendered the republic, his great defects, his still greater virtues, and his fortunate victories, all united to raise him to the empire of the world. Gustavus, Turenne, Eugene and Marlborough, in a sphere more confined, were animated by the same spirit. Some of these great men made their operations conform to the plan which they intended to pursue, during the campaign; others connected all their labours, all the operations of various campaigns, with the plan of the war they carried on; and the end they endeavoured to attain is discovered, when we with

attention

attention pursue their enterprises, which were conducted with prudence and seconded by audacity, and which often were crowned with splendid success.

Such was the plan of Cromwell, that ambitious assassin of a king; and of Richelieu, that adroit priest, who, in consequence of his perseverance, obtained the power by which he governed the grandees of the kingdom with the iron sceptre of despotism, almost extirpated the protestants, and humbled the monarchs of Austria, who were the irreconcileable enemies of France.

I do not intend to examine by what right Cæsar overthrew the republic of which he was a member; nor is this the place to decide whether the cardinal, during his administration, did good or harm to France; nor yet to question how far Turenne merited reproaches, for having served the Spaniards against his country. We shall here only speak of the real value of great qualities, and not of the proper or improper manner in which they have been employed.

The violent passions of Charles were, it is true, often obliged to cede to the estimates and sage measures of politics; but this king is, nevertheless, one of those singular apparitions that have excited the fear and astonishment of Europe.

rope. The grandeur and splendour of his actions surpass the expectation of the most ardent and most determined warrior. King of a valiant nation and arbitrator of the north, his succeeding misfortunes were excessive. Obliged to seek an asylum among barbarians, by whom he was finally made prisoner, he merits observation both during his good and his ill fortune; neither of which can be indifferent to warriors.

My intention is not to diminish the worth of this hero. I only mean to observe him with greater accuracy, that I may exactly determine in what he ought to be imitated, and proposed as an example.

To imagine a man who has attained the perfect knowledge of any science, whatever, would be as ridiculous as to pretend that fire quenches thirst, and that water satisfies hunger. To inform the hero that he has been guilty of error is but to make him recollect he is a man. Kings, generals, ministers, authors, in a word, all you who are obliged to appear on the great theatre of the world, you are equally subjected to the decisions of your cotemporaries, and to the sentence of unpardoning posterity.

The tooth of criticism can only make an impression on excellence; bad writings are not worthy the trouble. It is the same with all the paths

paths which lead to the temple of fame. Common mortals are suffered to pass on, without attracting attention ; but the penetrating eye is fixed on those who endeavour with uncommon talents to open to themselves new roads.

Charles XII. is, from many considerations, excusable in not having possessed all the perfections of the art of war. This difficult art is not innate with man. Though nature should have bestowed upon us superior genius, profound study and long experience are not the less necessary, for the improvement of the most auspicious qualities. It is requisite the warrior should begin his career under the guide of a great captain, or be taught the principles of his trade at much expense and peril, and after having received many lessons. We cannot possibly deceive ourselves, when we suppose all the capacity of a great general did not exist in a youth, who was a king at sixteen.

Charles XII. first saw the enemy when he first saw himself at the head of his forces.

I shall here take occasion to remark that all those who have commanded armies, in their early youth, have imagined that courage and rashness, only, were necessary to victory. Of this Pyrrhus, the great Condé, and our hero are examples.

But, since the discovery of gunpowder has changed the art of war, the whole system has in consequence been changed likewise. Strength of body, the first of qualities among the heroes of antiquity, is at present of no estimation. Stratagem vanquishes strength, and art courage. The understanding of the general has more influence, on the fortunate or unfortunate consequences of the campaign, than the prowess of the combatants. Prudence prepares and traces the route which valour must pursue; boldness must direct the execution, and abilities, not good fortune, only will acquire us the applause of the well informed. Our young officers may learn the theory of this difficult science by the study of some classical works, and form themselves by frequenting the society of men of experience.

These were resources which the king of Sweden wanted. Whether it were to amuse him or to inspire him with a love of the Latin tongue, which he hated, he was obliged to translate the ingenious romance of Quintus Curtius; and it is possible that this book awakened in him the desire to imitate Alexander; but it could not supply him with those rules which appertain to a more recent military art. Charles indeed, generally speaking, owed nothing to art, but all

to nature. His genius was not resplendent with acquired knowledge, but his mind bore the stamp of audacity to excess, and fortitude not to be shaken, so that it was capable of forming the greatest resolutions. Fame was the idol to which all was sacrificed. His actions, singly, gain, when they are more nearly examined, in proportion as his plans suffer loss. The firmness with which he opposed misfortune, his indefatigable activity in all his enterprises, and a heroical courage which was blind to danger, were certainly the characteristic traits of this extraordinary monarch.

By nature destined to be a hero, the young king followed the irresistible inclination which hurried him along, at the moment that the cupidity of his neighbours provoked him to war. His character, which, till then, had been mistaken, suddenly displayed itself. But it is time to follow the hero on his various expeditions. I mean to confine my remarks to his nine first campaigns, which open a vast field for observation.

The king of Denmark made war on the duke of Holstein, who had espoused the sister of Charles. Instead of sending troops into Holstein, where they could only have aided in completing the ruin of the country he wished to pro-

teft, he ordered eight thousand men into Pomerania. He himself, with his fleet, proceeded to Zealand, repulsed the enemy's troops that guarded the coast, besieged Copenhagen the capital of his foe, and in less than six weeks obliged the king of Denmark to conclude a peace, which was very advantageous to the duke of Holstein.

The plan and its execution were equally admirable. By this first essay, Charles raised himself to the rank of Scipio, who transported the war into Africa, that he might oblige Carthage to recal Hannibal out of Italy.

From Zealand, I shall attend the young hero into Livonia, whither his troops marched with incredible speed; and the *veni, vidi, vici*, of Cæsar were perfectly applicable to the whole campaign. The same enthusiasm, which inspired the king in his enterprises, animates our imagination, at the recital of the memorable victory he gained.

The conduct of Charles was sagely audacious, and by no means rash. It was necessary to succour the town of Narva, which the Czar besieged in person; and for this purpose he was obliged to attack and to vanquish the Russians. Their army was numerous, but it was only a swarm of ill-armed barbarians, without discipline and de-
stitute

stitute of commanders. The Swedes therefore might expect to gain the same advantages, over the Muscovites, as the Spaniards obtained over the savage nations of America. Their success was perfectly correspondent to their hopes, and Europe heard, with astonishment, that eight thousand Swedes had beaten and dispersed eighty thousand Russians.

From this triumph, I shall accompany the hero to another victory on the banks of the Duina, the only action in which he employed stratagem, and by which he profited like a consummate general.

The Saxons were on the opposite shore, and Charles deceived them by an artifice of which he himself was the inventor. He concealed his manœuvres by the thick smoke of wetted straw, under favour of which and an uninterrupted cannonade he caused his troops to pass the river, before old general Heinau, who commanded the Saxons, had time to suspect an action of such a nature. Scarcely were the Swedes on the opposite side of the water before they were formed, in order of battle, to fall on the enemy. The cavalry made some attacks and the infantry a few discharges, and the Saxons were dispersed and took to flight.

How splendid was such conduct ! On passing
the

the river, how great was the presence of mind, the activity, which Charles displayed, while he put his troops in order of battle, at the very moment they progressively landed ! What valour did he demonstrate in gaining the victory so rapidly and with so much honour ! Measures taken and executed after this manner merit the praise of all ages, and of all nations.

But it is inconceivable to recollect that we are obliged to seek the master strokes of Charles in his first campaigns. Was it that he was spoiled by the uninterrupted favours of fortune ? Or could he suppose that a man whom nothing resisted had no need of art ? Or did his courage, as admirable as it was astonishing, so far mislead him as to entail on him the defect of those warriors who possess no virtue but rashness ?

Hitherto Charles had turned his arms only against foes whom he was obliged to combat, in his own defence. But, after the battle of the Duina, we lose sight of the clue by which he was conducted. We perceive a great number of enterprises, without connection and without design, intermingled with brilliant actions, but which in no manner contributed to produce that great effect which he might reasonably have proposed to himself, in making war.

The Czar, past contradiction, was the most puissant

puissant and most dangerous enemy of Sweden. Should not the hero have returned in search of him, immediately after the defeat of the Saxons? The remains of the army beaten at Narva were not yet reunited.

Peter I. had hastily assembled thirty or forty thousand new raised men, who were not of greater worth than the eighty thousand whom Charles had disarmed. He ought therefore again vigorously to have attacked him, to have driven him out of Ingria, and not to have given him time to recollect himself, but have profited by this situation and have forced him to peace.

Augustus, who had recently been elected but not unanimously, beheld himself seated on a tottering throne. Deprive him of the aid of Russia and he must fall. Or Charles might dethrone him whenever he should please, supposing this to be a real advantage to Sweden. But, instead of acting thus prudently, the king seems to have forgotten the Czar and the Russians at bay, that he might give chace to I know not what Polish magnat (grandee) of the contrary party. The pursuit of individual vengeance made him neglect real advantages, and lose sight of the principal object.

After he had seized on Lithuania, his army entered Poland like a torrent, which overflowed and

and inundated the whole kingdom. The king was to-day at Warsaw, to-morrow at Cracow, and the next day at Lublin or at Lemberg. His troops spread themselves through Polish Prussia, again appeared at Warsaw, dethroned king Augustus, and pursued him into Saxony, there peaceably to take up winter quarters.

We must recollect that these campaigns, which I hasten over, afforded Charles employment during several years. Here I shall stop a moment, to examine his conduct. Let me however remark that, during the interval of these marches and counter-marches, the victory at Cliflons was gained, for which he was indebted to an able manœuvre made to take the Saxons in flank.

The method which Charles pursued in the war of Poland was certainly very defective. The conquest of Poland, which is every where an open country without fortresses, is a thing of no difficulty; but its preservation, as marshal Saxe well observes, is very precarious. The easier it is to be conquered the more difficult is it for a conqueror there to fix and maintain himself: the method he (marshal Saxe) proposes no doubt appears to be slow, but it is the only one which can be followed by those who would act with safety.

The

The king of Sweden was by nature much too hasty, to make profound reflections on the country in which he made war, and on the dispositions suitable to his military efforts. Had he first established himself in Polish Prussia, had he progressively secured the Vistula, and the Bog, by throwing up entrenched places of arms at the confluence of the rivers, or in other proper places, had he acted in the same manner on the other rivers which traverse Poland, he would have obtained points at which to rally, would have guarded the conquered districts, and the places he occupied would have enabled him to raise contributions and form magazines for the army. By this conduct, the war would have become more regular, and he would have prescribed bounds to the inroads of the Russians and the Saxons. The posts, well fortified, would have obliged his enemies, if they would act effectually, to undertake distant sieges, to which it would have been very difficult to transport the artillery necessary, because of the badness of the roads in that country. His situation never could become desperate, should misfortune happen; his rear would have been open, and by his posts he would have gained time to repair the loss, and to retard a victorious enemy.

By

By a contrary conduct, which Charles preferred, he was only master of the country which his troops occupied; his campaigns were continual marches; and the least unfortunate accident endangered the loss of his conquests. He was obliged to fight innumerable battles, and by the most glorious victory only gained the uncertain possession of provinces from which he had long before expelled the foe.

We insensibly approach the period when fortune began to declare against our hero. It is my intention to be still more circumspect than I have been, in judging events the termination of which was so unfortunate.

We ought not to pass judgment on the goodness of the plan by the issue of an undertaking. Let us carefully guard against placing that reverse of fortune which happens in execution to the account of want of precaution. It may be produced by invisible causes which the multitude call blind fatality, and which, notwithstanding their great influence over the destiny of men, from their obscurity and complication, escape the most profound and most philosophic spirit of remark.

We cannot in any manner accuse the king of Sweden of having himself been the cause of all the misfortunes which befel him. The success which

which had seconded all his enterprises, during the war in Poland, did not permit him to observe that he often departed from rules of art; and, as he had not been punished for his errors, he was unacquainted with the danger to which he had been exposed. This constant good fortune rendered him too confident; he did not even suspect it was necessary to change his measures.

In what relates to his projects on the dutchy of Smolensko and the Ukrain, it appears he may be accused of not having taken the least precaution. Supposing he had dethroned the Czar at Moscow, the execution of his plan would not have done him any honour; since success would not have been the work of prudence, but the effect of chance.

The subsistence of his troops should be the first care of a general. An army has been compared to an edifice, the basis of which is the belly. The negligence of the king in this essential point was what most contributed to his misfortunes, and most diminished his fame. What praise would the general merit who, in order to vanquish, must have troops that have no need of nourishment, soldiers that are incapable of fatigue, and heroes who are immortal?

Charles XII. is accused of having too inconsiderately depended on the promises of Mazeppa,

but he was not betrayed by the Cossack. Mazeppa on the contrary was himself betrayed, by a fortuitous concourse of unfortunate circumstances; which he neither could foresee nor avoid. Beside that minds of the power of that of Charles are incapable of suspicion, and are never diffident till they have been taught the wickedness and the ingratitude of men, by reiterated experience.

But I return to examine the plan and operation which Charles intended to execute, during his campaign. True it is I cannot say, with Coreggio, “I also am a painter”—yet I will venture to present my ideas to the connoisseur.

That he might repair the error he had committed, in having so long neglected the Czar, it appears to me that the king should have penetrated into Russia by the most easy route, as the most certain means of overwhelming his powerful adversary. This route undoubtedly was not that of Smolensko, nor the Ukrain. There were in both impracticable marshes, immense deserts, and great rivers to pass, before a half-cultivated country could be entered, and the army could arrive at Moscow. By taking either of these routes, Charles deprived himself of all the succour he might have received from Poland, or Sweden. The farther he advanced, into Russia, the farther he found himself from his kingdom.

To complete such an enterprise required more than one campaign. Whence was he to obtain provisions? By what road were his recruits to march? In what Moscovite or Cossack avenue could he establish a place of reserve? Whence could he obtain arms and clothing, which are continually to be renewed in an army; with numerous other things, of less value, but which are absolutely necessary?

So many insurmountable difficulties should have taught him to foresee that the Swedes were undoubtedly exposed to perish by fatigue and famine, and that they must diminish and melt away, even if victorious. If therefore the aspect of success was thus gloomy, how dreadful must be the picture of possible misfortune! A loss easy to be repaired, in a different situation, must become a decisive catastrophe, to an army abandoned to chance, in a desert country, without strong holds, and consequently without retreat.

Instead of exposing himself to so many difficulties with such temerity, instead of braving so many obstacles, a much more natural plan presented itself, which might have been conceived and executed without effort. Charles should have proceeded immediately to Petersburg, through Livonia and Ingria. The Swedish

fleet and the necessary transports, with a supply of provisions, might have followed by the gulph of Finland ; the recruits and other things necessary might have been sent on board this fleet, or marched through Finland. The king would thus have covered his best provinces, and not have removed from his frontiers. Success would have been more splendid, and the utmost adversity would not have rendered his situation hopeless. Should he have seized on Petersburg, he would have destroyed the new settlement of the czar; Russia would have lost sight of Europe, and the only link which connected that empire with the quarter of the globe we inhabit would have been broken.

This grand point gained, he would have been able to profit by success and proceed farther ; though I do not perceive that it was any way essential he should sign the articles of peace at Moscow.

Let me be permitted, for my own information, to compare the conduct of the king of Sweden, during these two campaigns, to the rules which the great masters of the military art have given.

Those rules require that a general should never endanger his army ; nor advance with any corps which is not sufficiently sustained. Charles, as it were, buried himself in the dutchy of Smolensko,

lensko, without thinking of preserving a communication with Poland. Our instructors have established it as a law that we should form a defensive line of communication, and cover it by the army, that our rear may be open, and our magazines in safety. The Swedes found themselves near the town of Smolensko with only provision sufficient for a fortnight ; they drove their enemies before them, beat their rear-guard, and pursued them at a venture, without exactly knowing whither the fugitive enemy was leading them.

We know of no precaution which the king took for the subsistence of his army, except that he commanded general Löwenhaupt to follow him with a considerable convoy. He therefore ought not to have left this convoy, which the army could not do without, so far in his rear; nor to have begun his march toward the Ukraine before its arrival; for the farther he removed from it the more he exposed himself to defeat. He should rather have chosen to return with his forces into Lithuania. He on the contrary continually pushed forward, and thus accelerated the loss of the army.

To conduct so opposite to all the rules of art, which alone was sufficient to incur ruin, misfortunes were added which can only be attributed

to fatality. The czar thrice attacked Löwenhaupt, and at length obliged him to destroy a great part of his convoy.

The king of Sweden therefore was ignorant of the views and motions of the Russians. If this were negligence on his part, he ought bitterly to have reproached himself; but if it were occasioned by invincible obstacles, we must once again place this disaster to the account of inevitable destiny.

When war is made in a half barbarous and almost desert country, it is necessary to build fortresses in order to keep possession. These are in some sort creations. The troops must aid in constructing roads, mounds, and bridges, and in raising redoubts, according as each shall become requisite. But a method so tedious was little correspondent to the impetuous and restless spirit of the king. It has been rightly remarked that, in what depended on bravery and promptitude, he was incomparable; but he was no longer the same man on occasions when regular plans or slow measures were to be observed, which time and patience only could ripen.

These considerations prove how necessary it is that a warrior should be master of his passions; and how difficult it is to unite, in a single person, all the talents of a great general.

I shall

I shall pass over the battle of Holofzin, as well as other combats of that campaign, because they were as ineffectual, relative to the war, as they were fatal to those who fell the sorrowful victims. Charles in general was prodigal of the blood of men. There are no doubt occasions on which it is necessary to fight; as, when more may be gained than lost; when an enemy discovers negligence in his camp, or on his march; or when a decisive blow may oblige him to make peace. But many generals only fight so often because they do not know how otherwise to rid themselves of their embarrassment. Therefore such conduct is not attributed to them as a merit, but rather to the want of genius.

At length we approach the decisive battle of Pultawa. The errors of great men are exemplary lessons to those who are possessed of less abilities; and there are few generals in Europe to whom the fate of Charles may not teach prudence, circumspection, and wisdom.

Marshal Keith, who afterward commanded in the Ukraine as a Russian general, and who has seen and examined Pultawa, has assured me that the fortifications of that place were only of earth, surrounded by a bad ditch. He was persuaded that the Swedes, on their arrival, might, without further preparation, have car-

ried it sword in hand, had not the king purposely prolonged the siege, in order to attract, that he might vanquish, the czar.

It is certain that the Swedes did not there discover the same ardour and impetuosity for which they were famous; it must also be allowed they did not make an attack till Menzikof had first thrown succour into the town, and till he had encamped near it, on the banks of the river Worskla. But the czar had a considerable magazine at Pultawa. Should not the Swedes, who were in want of every thing, have seized with all possible expedition on this magazine, that they might at a blow have taken it from the Russians, and have abundantly supplied themselves? Charles XII. undoubtedly had the most powerful reasons to push the siege with vigour, and he ought to have employed every means to have rendered himself master of this trifling place, before the arrival of succour.

Without including the rambling Cossacks of Mazeppa, who on the day of battle did more harm than good, the king had no more than eighteen thousand Swedes. How was it possible he should think of undertaking a siege, and of giving battle at the same time, with so small an army?

On

On the approach of the enemy it was requisite either to have raised the siege or to have left a considerable corps in the trenches; the one was disgraceful and the other much diminished the number of his combatants. This enterprise, which was totally contrary to the interest of the Swedes, was highly advantageous to the czar, and seems unworthy of our hero: it scarcely could have been expected even from a general who never had made war with reflection.

Without seeking to discover stratagems where there were none, without attributing to the king views which perhaps he never entertained, we ought rather to recollect that he very often was uninformed of the march of his enemy. It is to be presumed that he had no intelligence of the march of Menzikof, nor of the approach of the czar; and that consequently he did not think it necessary to hasten the siege, because he imagined Pultawa could not but surrender. Let us further remember that Charles always made war in the open field, that he did not understand laying siege, and that he had never had opportunities of acquiring knowledge by experience. When we consider too that the Swedes lay three months before Thorn, the works of which were no better than those of Pultawa, we may, with-

out injustice, pronounce what their abilities were for carrying on sieges.

When Mons, Tournay, and the works of Cohorn and Vauban, scarcely impeded the progress of the French for three weeks; and when, on the contrary, Thorn and Pultawa occupied the Swedes for several months, may we not well conclude the latter did not understand the art of taking towns? No place could resist them if it were possible to carry it by assault, sword in hand; but they were stopped by the most insignificant fortress before which it was necessary to open trenches.

Should these proofs be insufficient, I will ask, would not Charles, hot and impetuous as he was, have besieged and taken Dantzic, that he might have made the city feel the whole weight of his wrath, because of an offence which he had received; or would he have been satisfied with a sum of money, if he had not supposed the siege to be an enterprise above his strength?

But let us return to the principal object of this Essay. Pultawa was besieged, and the czar approached with his army. Charles still had it in his power to choose his post, and there to wait for his rival. This post he might have taken on the banks of the Woriska, either to dispute the passage of the river, or, the foe having passed it, immediately

mediately to have attacked the czar. The situation of the Swedes demanded quick determination. Either they must fall on the Russians the moment they arrived or entirely abandon the project of attack. To suffer the czar to choose his post, and to give him time necessary to put himself in a state of defence, was an irreparable fault: he already had the advantage of numbers, which was not a little; and he was allowed to acquire the advantage of ground and of military art, which was too much.

A few days before the arrival of the czar, the king was wounded, in visiting his trenches; the greatest blame consequently fell on his generals. It nevertheless appears that, as soon as he was resolved to give battle, he ought to have abandoned his trenches, that he might have been able to attack the enemy with the more vigour. Were he victorious, Pultawa would surrender of itself; were he vanquished, he would equally be obliged to raise the siege.

So many mistakes united announced the issue of the unfortunate battle, the approach of which was daily perceived.

It seemed as if fate had previously disposed of every thing to the disadvantage of the Swedes, and thus prepared their ruin. The wound of the king, which prevented him from personally heading

heading his troops as usual, and the negligence of the generals, who by their erroneous dispositions sufficiently shewed that they were unacquainted with the position of the enemy, or at least that their knowledge was imperfect, greatly contributed to that remarkable catastrophe. The attack also was begun by the cavalry; whereas it was the business of the infantry, and of artillery well directed.

The post of the Russians was very advantageous by its situation, and was made stronger with redoubts. A part of their front only could be attacked, and the small plain on which it was possible to form, for the assault, was flanked by the cross fire of three rows of redoubts. One wing of the Russian army was covered by an abatis, behind which there was an intrenchment, and the other was defended by an impracticable marsh.

Marshal Keith, who personally examined this so famous ground, maintained that, even with an army of a hundred thousand men, Charles could not have vanquished the czar thus posted; because the various difficulties that were successfully to be overcome must have cost an infinite number of men, and it is known that the bravest troops at length lose courage, after a long and

murderous attack, when they are opposed by new and unceasing impediments.

I know not what were the reasons which induced the Swedes, in a situation so critical as they then were, to hazard an attempt so dangerous. If their necessity was absolute, the error of obliging themselves to risk a battle in their own despite, and under the most disadvantageous circumstances, was great.

All that might well have been predicted happened; a considerable army, diminished by labour, want, and even victory, was led to the slaughter. General Creutz, who by a circuitous route was to have taken the Russians in flank, lost himself in the woods, and never appeared on the field.

Thus twelve thousand Swedes attacked a post defended by eighty thousand Muscovites, who no longer were that multitude of barbarians whom Charles had dispersed at Narva; they were metamorphosed into well-armed and well-posted soldiers, commanded by able foreign generals; well intrenched, and defended by the fire of a formidable train of artillery.

The Swedes led their cavalry against these batteries, and, as might have been expected, were obliged to retreat, in valour's despite. The infantry advanced; and, though it was received

ceived by a most dreadful fire from the redoubts, it seized on the two first of them. But the Russians attacked the Swedish battalions at once in front, flank and rear; repulsed them several times, and obliged them to relinquish the field of battle. Disorder then spread through the army; the king being wounded was unable to rally his troops, and there was no person who could collect the fugitives soon enough, because the best generals had been made prisoners at the beginning of the battle; and, as the Swedes had no place which covered the rear of their army, it was their fault that these troops, who fled as far as the banks of the Borysthenes, were obliged to surrender at discretion to the conqueror.

An author of considerable wit, but who probably studied the military art in Homer and Virgil, imagines the king of Sweden ought to have put himself at the head of the fugitives whom general Löwenhaupt had collected, on the banks of the Borysthenes, and pretends that the fever which his wound occasioned, and which, as he truly observes, was little calculated to inspire courage, was the reason that he neglected the only means which, according to him, remained for repairing his loss.

Such a determination might have been proper in ages when men fought with the sword and

and the club; but after a battle the infantry is always in want of powder. The ammunition of the Swedes formed a part of the baggage, which the enemy had already taken; therefore, if Charles had been unwise enough to have headed these troops, destitute as they were of powder and of bread, two things which oblige even fortresses to surrender, the czar would soon have had the pleasure of giving audience to his brother Charles, for whom he waited with great impatience; consequently, in a situation so desperate, the king, had he been in perfect health, could do nothing better than take refuge among the Turks.

Monarchs, no doubt, ought not to fear danger; but their dignity equally induces them carefully to avoid being made prisoners; and less from personal considerations than from the dreadful consequences which result to their states. French authors should recollect the considerable injury which their nation suffered by the captivity of Francis I. The wounds which France then received still bleed, and the venality of state-dignities, which was inevitable, in order to raise the sum for the royal ransom, is a durable monument of that disgraceful epocha.

In flight itself our hero is worthy of admiration.

tion. Any other man would have sunken under a blow so severe; but he formed new plans, found resources even in misfortune, and, a fugitive in Turkey, meditated to arm the Porte against Russia.

It is with pain I behold Charles degrading himself to the rank of a courtier of the sultan, begging a thousand purses, and to perceive with what headlong, what inconceivable obstinacy he persevered in wishing to remain in the states of a monarch who would not suffer him there to remain. I could wish the strange battle of Bender might be blotted from his history. I regret the precious time he lost in a barbarous country, feeding on vain hope, deaf to the plaintive voice of Sweden, and insensible of his duty, by which he was so loudly summoned to the defence of his kingdom, which he in some manner seemed, while absent, voluntarily to renounce.

The plans which are attributed to him after his return into Pomerania, and which certain persons have made originate with count von Goertz, have always appeared to me so indeterminate, so monstrous, and so little consistent with the situation and exhausted state of his kingdom, that my reader will permit me, in behalf of the fame of Charles, to leave them in silence. That war, so fruitful in fortunate and

unfortu-

unfortunate events, was begun by the enemies of Sweden ; and Charles, obliged to resist their plan of aggrandizement, was only in a state of defence. His enemies attacked him because they misunderstood and despised his youth. While he was successful, and appeared to be a dangerous enemy, he was envied by Europe ; but when fortune turned her back, the allied powers shook the throne of Charles, and parcelled out his kingdom.

Had this hero possessed moderation equal to his courage, had he set limits to his triumphs, had he reconciled himself to the czar when an opportunity of honourable peace presented itself, he would have stifled the evil designs of the envious ; but, as soon as they recovered from their panic, they only thought of the means of enriching themselves by the ruins of his monarchy. Unfortunately, the passions of that man were subject to no modification, he wished to carry every thing by force and haughtiness, and despotically to lord it even over despots. To make war and to dethrone kings was to him but one and the same act.

In all the books which treat of Charles XII. I find high sounding praises bestowed on his frugality and continence ; but twenty French cooks in his kitchen, a thousand courtesans in his

his train, and ten companies of players in his army, would not have occasioned his kingdom the hundredth part of the evils which were brought on it, by his ardent thirst of glory and desire of vengeance. Offences made so deep and so durable an impression, on the soul of Charles, that the most recent effaced all traces of those by which they had been preceded. It may be said we see the different passions which agitated the irreconcileable mind of this prince with so much violence sprout, when we observe and attend him at the head of his armies.

He began by making war on the king of Denmark; he afterward persecuted the king of Poland, without measure or limits; presently the whole weight of his anger fell on the czar; and at length his vengeance selected the king of England as its only object; so that he forgot himself so far as to lose sight of the natural enemy of his kingdom, that he might course a shadow, and seek an enemy who was become his foe from accident, or rather from chance.

If we collect the various traits which characterize this extraordinary man, we shall find him less intelligent than courageous; less sage than active; less attentive to real advantage than the slave of his passions; as enterprising, but not so artful, as Hannibal; rather resembling Pyrrhus than

than Alexander; and as splendid as Condé, at Rocroi, Friburg, and Nordlinguen. But he could not at any time be compared to Turenne, if we observe the latter at the battles of the Downs and of Colmar; and especially during his two last campaigns.

Though the actions of our hero shine with great brilliancy, they must not be imitated, except with peculiar caution. The more resplendent they are, the more easily may they seduce the youthful, headlong, and angry warrior; to whom we cannot often enough repeat that valour, without wisdom, is insufficient; and that the adversary with a cool head, who can combine and calculate, will finally be victorious over the rash.

To form a perfect general, the courage, fortitude, and activity of Charles XII. the penetrating glance and policy of Marlborough, the vast plans and art of Eugene, the stratagems of Luxembourg, the wisdom, order, and foresight of Montecuculi, and the grand art, which Turenne possessed, of seizing the critical moment, should be united. Such a phoenix will with difficulty be engendered. Some pretend that Alexander was the model on which Charles XII. formed himself. If that be true, it is equally so that the successor of Charles is prince Edward; and

if unfortunately the latter should serve as an example to any one, the copy, at best, can only be a Don Quixot.

But what right have I to judge the most celebrated and the greatest generals? Have I myself observed the precepts I have just prescribed? I can only reply that the faults of others, on the slightest effort of the memory, start to view, and that we glide lightly over our own,

CRITICAL EXAMINATION

OF THE

W O R K

ENTITLED

SYSTÈME de la NATURE.

WOUTERJANNE ZADIKI

ARTICLE

WOUTERJANNE ZADIKI

A

CRITICAL EXAMINATION

OF THE WORK ENTITLED

*SYSTÈME de la NATURE**.

THE *Système de la Nature* is a work which seduces at the first reading, and the defects of which, being concealed with great art, are not discovered, till the book has been several times perused. The author has had the address to keep the consequences of his principles out of sight, that he may mislead critical examination. The illusion however is not so potent but that the inconsistencies and contradictions into which he often falls may be perceived, as may the confessions he makes which are opposite

* The System of Nature.

to his system, and which seem to be extorted from him by the force of truth. The metaphysical subjects on which he treats are obscure, and surrounded with the greatest difficulties. To be led astray is pardonable, when we enter a labyrinth in which so many before us have been lost.

Still however it should seem that, while pursuing this shadowy path, it may be trodden with less peril, if we are diffident of our own knowledge, if we recollect that in such researches experience is no longer our guide, and that we have nothing better for the support of our opinions than probabilities, more or less preponderant. This reflection is surely sufficient to inspire any philosopher, who systematises, with reserve and modesty. Our author apparently has not thought thus, since he glories in being dogmatical.

The principal points on which he treats in his work are,

I. God and Nature.

II. Fate.

III. The morality of religion compared with the morality of natural religion.

IV. Kings the origin of all the misfortunes of states.

With respect to the first point, we are somewhat surprised, considering its importance, at the

the reasons which the author alleges to reject a deity. He affirms there is less difficulty in admitting blind matter, acted upon by motion, than in referring to an intelligent and self-existent cause; as if that which was less difficult to conceive was more true than another thing which required deeper research to discover *.

He avows that the indignation he has conceived against religious persecution has induced him to become an atheist. But are the passions and indolence of men sufficient reasons to determine the opinions of a philosopher? A confession so ingenuous cannot fail to inspire his readers with diffidence. How may we put confidence in him if he be determined by reasons so frivolous? I imagine our philosopher sometimes too complaisantly indulges his imagination; and that, struck by the contradictory definitions which the theologians have given of the Divinity, he confounds these definitions, which good sense readily gives up, with an intelligent Nature, which must necessarily preside over the order of the universe. The whole world is a proof of such an intelligent Being, to be convinced of which we have but to open our eyes. Man is a rational creature produced by Nature; the result is that Nature is infinitely more intel-

* Chap. XII. Tome II.

ligent than man, or Nature could not have communicated perfections which she herself does not possess; for that would be a formal contradiction.

If thought be the consequence of organisation, it is certain that the immensity of Nature, being more organised than man, who is an imperceptible part of the grand whole, must be possessed of intelligence to the highest degree of perfection. Blind Nature aided by motion could be productive of nothing but confusion; and, as she would act without combining causes, she never could attain determinate effects, nor produce those master-pieces which human sagacity is obliged to admire, alike in the infinitely small as in the infinitely great. Effects which Nature has proposed to herself, in her works, manifest themselves so evidently that we are obliged to acknowledge a sovereign Cause, and a necessarily presiding superior Intelligence.

When I examine man, I see him born the most helpless of animals, destitute of arms, offensive and defensive, incapable of resisting the severity of the seasons, and continually exposed to be devoured by ferocious beasts. To compensate for the feebleness of his body, and that his species may not become extinct, Nature has endowed

endowed him with intelligence superior to that of other creatures. By this advantage, he artificially procures to himself that which he, in other respects, appears to have been denied by Nature.

The vilest of animals contains in his body a laboratory more artificially contrived than that of the most able chymist, in which the juices are prepared that renovate his being, and that assimilate themselves to the parts which compose and prolong his existence. How might an organisation so wonderful, and so necessary to the preservation of all animated beings, be the work of an unconscious cause, which should operate its greatest miracles without even perceiving them? This is more than enough to confound our philosopher, and ruin his system. The eye of a mite, or a blade of grass, are sufficient to prove the intelligence of the workman.

I will go farther; I even believe that, admitting like him a blind first cause, it is possible to demonstrate that the propagation of different species would become uncertain, and degenerate at chance into various strange beings: therefore there can only be the immutable laws of an intelligent Nature which, in such a multitude of productions, can be able invariably to maintain each species perfectly distinct, and entire.

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The author in vain endeavours to deceive himself; overbearing truth obliges him to own * that Nature collects, in her immense laboratory, materials for the formation of new products. She therefore proposes an end to herself; she is therefore intelligent. If we possess but the least degree of candour, it is impossible to deny this truth; nor can it be overthrown by the objections which are drawn from physical and moral evil. The eternity of the world destroys that difficulty. Nature therefore is beyond contradiction intelligent, continually acting according to the eternal laws of attraction, motion, gravity, &c. which she neither can destroy, nor change.

Though our reason proves there is such a Being, of whom we have a glimpse, and whom we define by some of her operations, our knowledge never can be sufficient for us to give any definitions, and every philosopher who shall attack the phantom that has been created by theologians will, in effect, combat with the cloud of Ixion, without in any manner wounding the Being that is proved to exist by all which the universe contains.

We have great reason to be astonished that a philosopher so enlightened as our author should

* Part I. Chap. VI.

give

give credit to the ancient errors of propagation without semen, and from putrefaction. He cites Needham, the English physician, who, deceived by a false experiment, imagined he had produced eels. If such facts were established, we might grant the operations of a blind nature; but they are disproved by all experiments.

Could it be supposed that the same author admits a universal deluge; an absurdity, a miracle, inadmissible to a mathematician, and which could not in any respect conform to his system? Were those waters which overflowed our globe created for that express purpose? What an enormous mass to raise above our highest mountains! Were they afterward annihilated? What became of them? What! Does he shut his eyes to an intelligent Being who presides over the universe, and whom all nature announces, and does he believe in a miracle which, of all that have been imagined, is the most opposite to reason! I own I cannot conceive how so many contradictions could be reconciled to a philosophic mind; or how the author should not perceive them himself, while writing his work. But let us proceed.

He has almost literally copied the system of fatality, exposed by Leibnitz, and which has been commented on by Wolf. That we may not

not misconceive each other, I believe it is necessary to define the idea which is annexed to freedom. By this word I understand every act of the will, which the will itself determines on, without constraint. Do not let it be thought that, assuming this as a principle, I propose to combat the system of necessity in general, and in all its parts ; I seek only the truth, which I respect wherever I find it, and whenever truth is shewn me I submit. That we may properly determine the question, let us refer to the principal argument of the author.

All our ideas, says he, are obtained by the senses, and in consequence of our organisation ; therefore our actions are all the actions of necessity.

I allow with him that we are indebted for every thing to our senses, as to our organs ; but the author ought to perceive that received ideas give birth to new combinations. In the first of these operations the mind is passive, in the second it is active. Invention and imagination labour on objects with which the senses have brought us acquainted. Thus, for example, when Newton studied geometry, his mind was patient, it collected opinions ; but when he arrived at his astonishing discoveries, he was more than an agent, he was a creator. We ought well

well to distinguish the different operations of the mind in man. His mind is a slave in those in which impulse rules, and exceedingly free in those in which imagination acts.

I agree, therefore, with the author, that there is a certain chain of causes, the influence of which acts on man, and rules him occasionally. Man receives his temperament and character at his birth, with the germs of his vices and his virtues, and a portion of mind which he can neither contract nor expand, of talents and of genius, or of heaviness and of incapacity. Thus often when we suffer ourselves to be carried away by the intemperance of our passions, necessity triumphs victorious over freedom; and, as often as the force of reason vanquishes these passions, so often is freedom the conqueror.

But is not man exceedingly free when various modes are proposed to him, and he examines those modes, inclines toward the one, or toward the other, and in fine determines by choosing?

The author will no doubt answer me that necessity directs his choice; but I believe I perceive an abuse of the word necessity, confounded with the words cause, motive, reason, in this answer. There can be no doubt that nothing happens without a cause; but all cause is not necessity. Every man, who is in his senses, is

determined by reasons that have relation to his self-love, and, I repeat, he would not be free, but a madman who ought to be chained, were he to act otherwise.

Freedom therefore resembles wisdom, reason, virtue and health, which are not possessed at all times by any mortal; but only at intervals. We are at one time patient under the empire of fatality, and at another we are free and independent agents. Let us apply to Locke. This philosopher is well persuaded that, when his door is shut, he is not free to go into the street; but when it is open he is free to act as he thinks proper. The more we analyse this subject the more confused it becomes; and by over refinement we at length render it so obscure that we no longer understand it ourselves. It is particularly vexatious, to the advocates of necessity, that the activity of their lives is in continual contradiction to their speculative principles.

The author of the *Système de la Nature*, after having exhausted every argument his fancy can furnish to prove that necessity enchains, and absolutely directs, men in all their actions, ought therefore to conclude that we are only a kind of machines; or, if you please, of puppets, worked by the hand of a blind agent. He however is impassioned against priests, against governments;

and against education ; he therefore believes that the men who fill these stations are free, at the same time that he proves them to be slaves. What absurdity ! What contradiction ! If every thing is moved by inevitable causes, advice, instruction, laws, punishment, and rewards, become as superfluous as they are useless. This were but to say to the man in bondage, break thy chains ; as well might we preach to an oak to persuade it to transform itself into an orange tree.

But experience proves that men are capable of being corrected. From this we must necessarily conclude that they at least enjoy freedom in part. Let us abide by the lessons such experience gives, and not admit a principle which is incessantly contradicted by our actions. Consequences the most fatal to society result from the doctrine of necessity, by the admission of which Marcus Aurelius and Catiline, the president de Thou, and Ravaillac, would in merit be equal. We must not consider men as so many machines, some constructed for vice and others for virtue, that are incapable of themselves either of merit or demerit, and consequently of being punished or rewarded. This saps the very foundations of morality, purity of manners, and every thing on which society rests.

But

But what is the origin of that love which men in general have for freedom? How could they become acquainted with it if it were only an ideal being? They therefore must have experienced, must have felt this freedom; for it would be improbable that they could love it if it did not really exist. Whatever Calvin, Leibnitz, the Arminians, and the author of the *Système de la Nature* may say, they will never persuade any one that we are mill-wheels, actuated by irresistible necessity, according to its caprice.

All these errors into which our author has fallen are derived from the mad spirit of systematizing. He is prejudiced in favour of his opinions. He has met with phenomena, circumstances, and separate facts which agree with his principles; but, in generalizing his ideas, he has met with other combinations, and truths established by experience, which were averse to his doctrine. With respect to the latter, by distorting and forcing them, he has adapted them to the remainder of his system, according to the best of his abilities. Certain it is, he has not forgotten any of the proofs which can support the dogma of necessity; and it is at the same time evident that he disproves this doctrine, through the whole course of the work. For my own part, I think that, in such a case, a real philosopher

Sophier ought to sacrifice self-love to the love of truth.

Let us examine what he says concerning religion. The author might be accused of poverty of understanding, and particularly of want of art, since he calumniates the Christian religion, by imputing to it the defects which it has not. How can he with truth affirm that this religion is the cause of all the miseries of mankind? To have expressed himself with justice, he ought simply to have said that the ambition and interest of men have made that religion a pretext to disturb the world, and gratify their passions.

Let us be candid, and what could we subtract from the morality which the Decalogue contains? Did the Gospel only prescribe the single precept —“ Do unto others as you would wish they should do unto you,”—we should be obliged to confess that these few words include the quintessence of all morality. Was not the forgiveness of injuries, and were not charity and benevolence preached by Jesus, in his excellent sermon on the mount?

We must not therefore confound the law and the abuse of the law; those things which are written and those which are practised; nor the true Christian morality with the degraded morality of the priesthood. How might he charge

the Christian religion with being in itself the cause of the depravation of manners? The author indeed might have accused the clergy of substituting faith to the social virtues, exterior practices to good works, trivial expiations to remorse of conscience, and the indulgences which they sell to the necessity of repentance. He might have reproached them with giving absolution from oaths, and with constraining and violating the consciences of men.

Such criminal abuse deserves we should rise against those by whom it has been introduced, and those by whom it is authorised. Yet what right would he have so to do; he who supposes men are machines? How could he justly reproach a machine with a shaved head, who was forced by necessity to deceive, to act the knave, and insolently to sport with vulgar credulity?

But let us for a moment proclaim a truce with the system of necessity, and take things such as we really find them in the world. The author ought to know that neither religion, laws, nor any government whatever, can prevent kingdoms from containing more or less villains, among the vast number of citizens of whom they are composed. The great body of the people is every where but little addicted to reason, easily carried away by the torrent of the passions,

passions, and more inclined to vice than to virtue. All that can be expected from a good government is that great crimes should be more uncommon than under a bad government. Our author ought to know that extravagant assertions are not reasons, that calumny is to the discredit of the philosopher, as it is of the author who is no philosopher, and that when he becomes angry, which sometimes happens, we must apply that answer to him which Menippus made to Jupiter—"Thou seighest the thunder-bolt; thou art therefore in the wrong."

Past all doubt, there is but one morality; which contains all that individuals reciprocally owe each other; which is the basis of all society; and which ought ever to be the same, be the religion or government what they may. The morality of the Gospel, in its abstract purity, would be useful in practice; but, if we admit the dogmas of necessity, there is no longer either morality or virtue, and the whole social edifice tumbles.

That the end of our author was to overthrow religion is uncontested; but he has chosen the most circuitous route, and the most difficult to accomplish his purpose. The following is, in my opinion, that which he ought to have followed. He should have attacked the historical

part of religion, the absurd fables on which it is built, and the traditions, more absurd, more mad, more ridiculous, than the most extravagant of those retailed by paganism. Such would have been the means to have proved they were the words of men and not of God, and to have recovered men from their foolish and stupid credulity. The author had still a shorter way to arrive at the same goal. After having rehearsed the arguments against the immortality of the soul, which Lucretius so forcibly gives in his third book, he ought to have concluded that, since, when life ended, every thing ended with man, he would have nothing to fear, nor any thing to hope, after death, there consequently could not subsist any relation between him and the Deity, who neither could punish him nor reward. Without such a relation there is no longer either worship or religion, and the Deity would only become an object of speculative curiosity to man.

How many are the singularities and the contradictions in the work of this philosopher! After having laboriously filled two volumes with proofs of his system*, he confesses there are few men by whom it is capable of being embraced, and

* Tome II. chap. 13.

maintained; we might therefore believe that, blinded as he supposes Nature to be, she acts without cause, and that an irresistible necessity obliged him to compose a work capable of plunging him into the utmost peril, without the possibility that this work should benefit either himself or any other person.

Let us come to what he says of sovereigns, whom the author has used very singular endeavours to decry. I will venture to assure him that the clergy never said things so foolish to princes as he imputes to them. If they have happened to style their kings the images of the Deity, it was no doubt in a very hyperbolical sense; though the intention was to warn them, by the comparison, not to abuse their authority, but to be just and beneficent, according to the vulgar idea which is formed of the Deity, among all nations.

The author imagines to himself treaties made between monarchs and ecclesiastics, by which the former promise to honour and support the priesthood, on condition that the priests will preach submission to the people. I will venture to assure him that this is a crude opinion, and that nothing is more false, nor has been more ridiculously imagined than this said compact. It is exceedingly probable that priests should

endeavour to give credit to such an opinion, that they might enhance their own value, and become of consequence. Certain it is that sovereigns, by their credulity, superstition, imbecility, and blindness toward the church, give reason to suspect them of being on such terms with the clergy; but all in effect depends on the character of the prince: when he is feeble and a bigot, the clergy then gain power; if he have the misfortune to be incredulous, priests then cabal against him, and, unable to do better, calumniate and blacken his memory.

I place these trifling blunders however to the account of the author's prejudices. But which way could he accuse kings of being the cause of the ill education of their subjects? He imagines it to be a principle in politics that it is better for a government to reign over an ignorant than an enlightened nation. This smells a little of the opinions of the rector of a college, who, confined within his narrow speculative circle, is neither acquainted with the world, with government, nor with the elements of politics.

All governments, in civilized nations, no doubt, watch for the instruction of the public. What are the colleges, academies, and universities, which abound throughout all Europe, but establish-

establishments destined for the information of youth? But to pretend that a monarch must, in a vast kingdom, answer for the education which each father of a family shall bestow on his children, is the most ridiculous supposition that ever was formed. The sovereign must not interfere with the domestic affairs of families, or the transactions of the houses of individuals; for the result of such interference would be the most hateful tyranny.

Our philosopher writes the first thoughts that occur, without examining their consequences; and he certainly is in an ill temper, when he so very politely asserts courts are the hot-beds of public corruption. I really blush for philosophy. How is it possible to be so extravagant! How may any man utter such nonsense! A mind less vehement, a true sage, will be satisfied with remarking that, the more numerous the people, the more refined are their vices, the more opportunities have the passions to display themselves, and the more they become active. The simile of the hot-bed* might have been forgiven Juvenal, or some satirist by profession; but for a philosopher——! I shall say no more.

Had our author been six months syndic in

* *Royer. T.*

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the little town of Pau, in the province of Bearn, he would better have learned how to estimate men than he ever will by his own speculations. How could he bring himself to suppose that sovereigns encourage their subjects in the commission of crimes? And what good would result to them, by laying themselves under the necessity of punishing malefactors? It happens occasionally, no doubt, that culprits escape the rigour of the laws; but this never originates in any fixed design to encourage guilt by the hope of being guilty with impunity. Such kind of cases must be attributed to the too great indulgence of the prince. There is as little doubt that there are culprits in all governments, who by intrigue, corruption, or the support of powerful protectors, find means to escape the punishments they have merited; but, in order to put an end to such arts, such intrigues, such corruptions, it were necessary a king should possess that omniscience which divines attribute to God.

In what relates to government, our author faulters at every step. He imagines that poverty and wretchedness provoke men to commit the greatest crimes. This is not true. There is no country in which any man, who is neither indolent nor sluggish, will not find the means of subsisting by his labour. The class of

of the dissipated and the prodigal is, in all states, the most dangerous. Their resources are soon exhausted by their profusion, and they are thus reduced to the worst extremities, by which they are afterward forced to recur to the meanest, most hateful, and most infamous expedients. The followers of Catiline, the adherents of Julius Cæsar, the insurgents under cardinal de Retz, and those who followed the fortunes of Cromwell, were all people of this class; who were unable to pay their debts, or repair their ruined fortunes, except by the overthrow of the states of which they were members.

Among the higher order of families, the prodigal deceive and cabal, and among the people, the spendthrift and the idler finish their career by thieving, and by the commission of the most enormous crimes, to the danger of the public safety.

After the author has evidently proved that he is neither acquainted with men, nor with the manner in which men ought to be governed, he repeats the satirical declamations of Boileau against Alexander the Great; and makes sallies against Charles V. and his son, Philip II.; though we perceive, beyond all doubt, that he aims his shafts at Louis XIV. Of all the paradoxes which the self-named philosophers of our times

times support with the most satisfaction, they appear to have that of degrading the great men of the past age most at heart. What fame will they acquire by exaggerating the faults of a king who has effaced them in the greatness of his glory and his grandeur? The errors of Louis XIV. are beside well known; nor have these self-said philosophers so much as the trifling merit of having been the first to discover them. A king who should only reign a week would be guilty of some mistakes, no doubt; well therefore may the monarch who passed sixty years of his life upon the throne.

Did we wish to become impartial judges, and to examine the life of this great sovereign, we should be obliged to allow he did more good than harm to his kingdom. To write a circumstantial apology for him would be to fill a volume: I shall confine myself to some principal points.

Let us attribute, therefore, as we ought, his persecution of the Hugonots to the debility of his age, and the superstition in which he had been educated, as well as to the imprudent confidence which he had in his confessor. Place the burning of the Palatinate to the account of the severe and haughty temper of Louvois; and

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we shall have little to reproach him with, except some wars undertaken from vanity, or an impetuous spirit.

On the reverse, no man can affirm he was not the protector of the fine arts. To him is France indebted for her manufactures and her commerce. To him she owes the union and connection of her fine frontiers, and the respect in which she was held during his reign in Europe. Render homage therefore to those praise-worthy and truly royal qualities. Whoever at present wishes to assault sovereigns, ought to attack their effeminacy, their sloth, their ignorance. They are rather feeble than ambitious, and more vain than desirous to govern.

The real sentiments of the author concerning governments do not discover themselves till toward the end of his work. There it is he informs us that subjects, according to him, ought to possess the right of deposing when they are disgusted with their sovereigns. It is to induce this conclusion that he exclaims against great armies, which might impede his purpose. We imagine we are reading the fable of the wolf and the shepherd of La Fontaine. If ever the crude notions of our philosopher should be capable of being realized, the forms of government in all the states of Europe must previously

be now modelled, which to him appears a trifle. It is also necessary, which I think impossible, that the subjects who should become the judges of their masters should be sage and equitable; that the candidates for the sceptre should be void of ambition; and that neither intrigue, cabal, nor the spirit of independence should be prevalent. It will farther be necessary that the de-throned race should be totally extirpated; or food for civil wars would be provided, and chiefs of parties would always be ready to head factions, and trouble the state.

The result of such a form of government must be that the candidates who should aspire to the throne would continually excite and animate the people against the prince, and would foment seditions and insurrections, under favour of which they might hope to rise, and become themselves possessed of power. Hence a government like this would incessantly be exposed to intestine wars, which are a thousand times more dangerous than foreign conflicts.

To avoid inconveniences such as these, the order of succession has been adopted and established in the various kingdoms of Europe. Who cannot but perceive the troubles that are the consequence of elections? We reasonably fear lest turbulent neighbours should profit by

so favourable an opportunity to subjugate or lay waste the kingdom. The author might easily have informed himself of the result of his principles. He need but to have cast a glance on Poland, where each election of a king is the epocha of a civil and a foreign war.

It is very erroneous to suppose that, in human affairs, perfection may be attained. The imagination may forge such chimeras; but they are never realized. Nations have, from the beginning of the world, tried every form of government. With these history abounds; but there is none which is not subject to inconvenience. Most nations however have authorised the order of succession in reigning families, because it was the best choice they were able to make. The evil that flows from this institution is that it is impossible for talents and merit to be transmitted, without intermission, from father to son, in one family, during a long succession of ages; and it happens that the throne is sometimes in the possession of princes unworthy to be there seated.

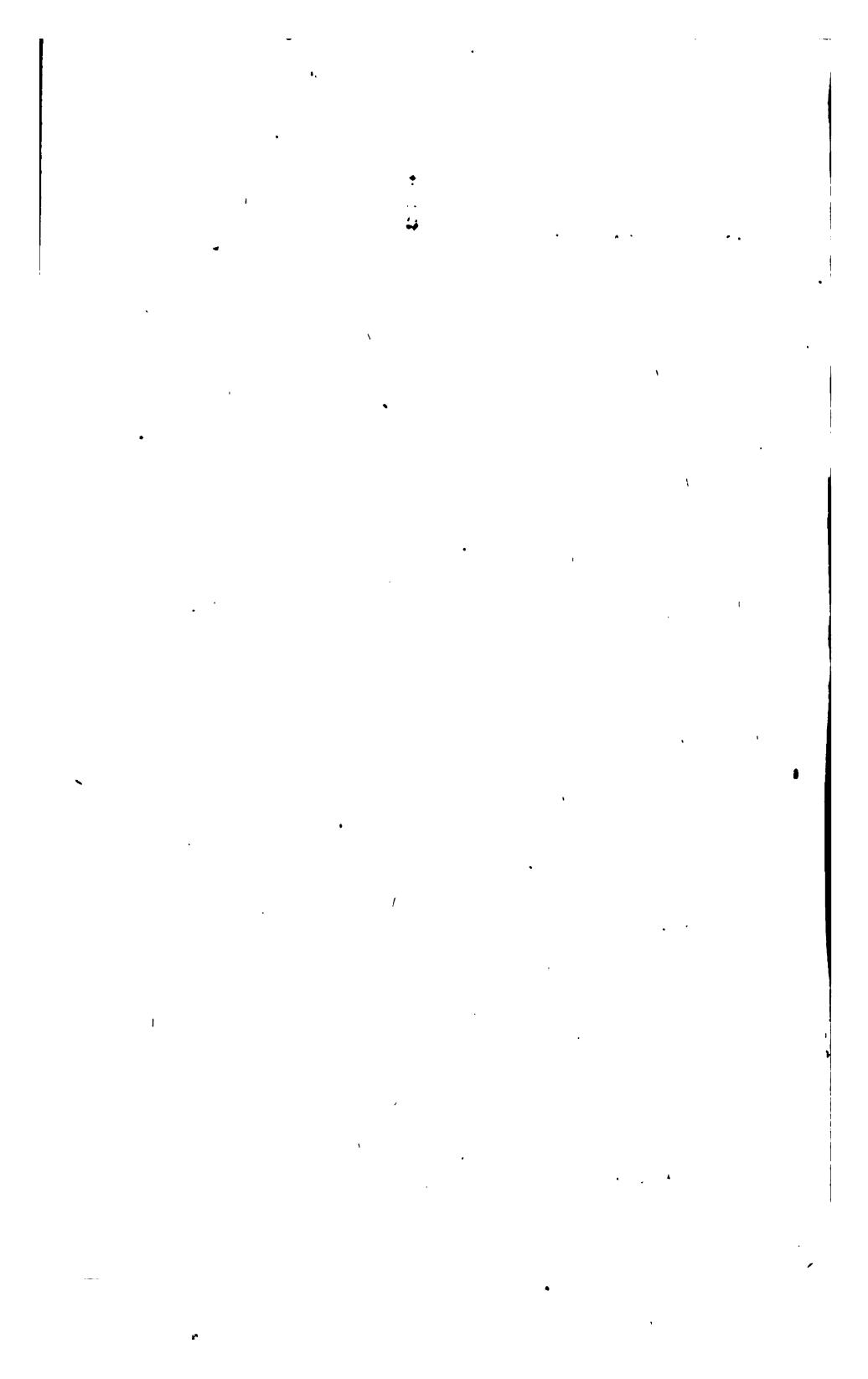
Under such circumstances, there remains the resource of able ministers, who by their abilities may secure what would no doubt be ruined by the incapacity of the sovereign. The good that evidently results from this arrangement is that

princes who are born to reign are less imperious and vain than the newly dignified, who, inflated by grandeur, and disdaining those who were their equals, delight in making their own superiority felt on every occasion.

But let it be particularly observed that the monarch who is certain to be succeeded by his children, believing he labours for his family, will apply himself with the greater zeal to the true good of the state, which he considers as his patrimony. Whereas, in elective kingdoms, sovereigns think only of themselves, and of what is to happen during their lives, but of nothing more. They endeavour to enrich their family, and suffer all things to decay, in a monarchy which they consider as a precarious possession, and which they must hereafter renounce. Should any one desire to convince himself of this, he need but learn what happens in the bishopricks of Germany, in Poland; and at Rome itself; where the mournful effects of elections are but too evident.

Act how we will in this world, we must subject ourselves to difficulties, and often to very fearful inconveniences. It is therefore necessary, when we imagine ourselves sufficiently enlightened to instruct the public, that we should particularly guard against proposing remedies worse than

than the ills of which we complain ; and, when we are unable to do better, to conform to ancient customs, and especially to the established laws.



A
THEOLOGICAL COMMENTARY

ON

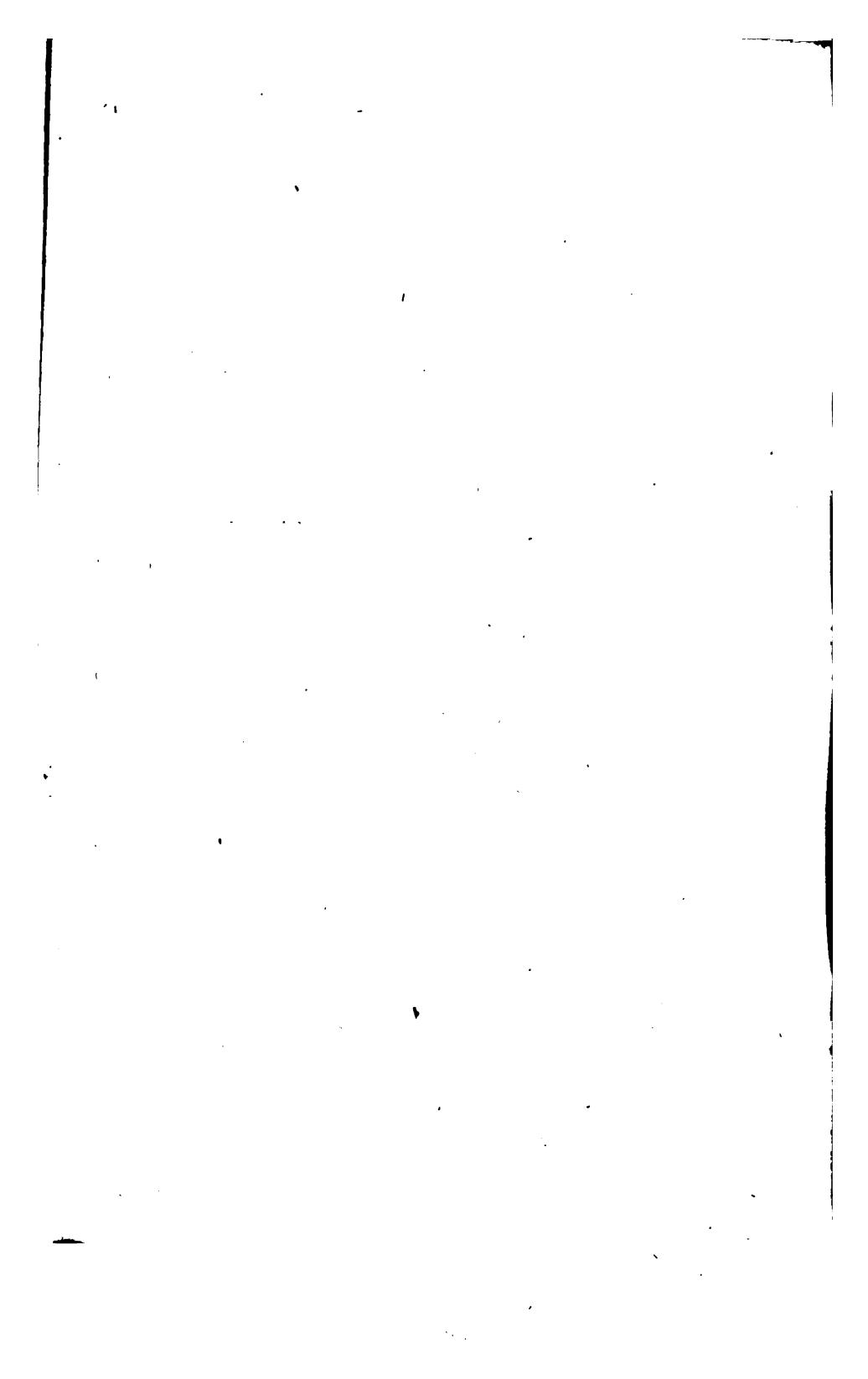
B L U E - B E A R D.

BY

D O N C A L M E T.

VOL. V.

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P R E F A C E

BY

B I S H O P D U P U I S.

THE whole world ought to be told that the Theological Commentary on Blue-beard, a work equally useful and edificatory, has lately been discovered among the papers of the defunct Don Calmet. There were some doubts concerning publishing this commentary, in the age in which this learned Benedictin lived, because doctor Tamponet, and other members of the Sorbonne, maintained, with scandalous obstinacy, that Blue-beard was not a canonical book. The archbishop of Paris, whose vast erudition is so well known, cardinal Rohan, who is supposed to be one of the first theologians in the kingdom, the bishop of Vézelay, a person distinguished for his zeal, the bishop of Montpellier, the

bishop of Tours, in fine, all the first dignitaries of our church have proved that Blue-beard is not an apocryphal book.

This gave occasion to a dispute, in which most exquisite erudition was displayed. The partisans of Blue-beard maintained their argument by proofs from Erasmus, who cites the book in his incomparable work in the praise of Folly; from St. Athanasius, who gives passages from it in his disputes against the Arians; from St. Basil, who thinks it most orthodox; from St. Gregory Nazianzen, who grounds his arguments on the prophecies it contains, in his apology for the Christian religion, addressed to the emperor; and from St. John Chrysostom, who drew from this pious book the beautiful rhetorical figures with which he embellished his admirable Homilies. The pious bishop Las Casas every day read some passages from it, to strengthen him in the faith. Blue-beard was the breviary of Pope Alexander VI. The cardinal of Lorrain, in like manner, judged it to be a canonical book. Thus, if we count votes, we shall find that those who maintain Blue-beard to be a prophetic and divinely inspired writing, are very superior, in number, to those who hold it in doubt.

The following is what we can learn of its origin. Blue-beard appeared at Alexandria, with

with the translation which the seventy made of the law of Moses, and other books of the Old Testament. During the captivity of the ten tribes, they had lost the Old Testament, but it had been preserved by the Samaritans. Blue-beard was found among these books. When the people returned to Jerusalem, after they had quitted Babylon, Esdras and Nehemiah were at great labour to collect whatever they could heap together of these precious lost works. Some books they found, others they recomposed from memory. As this was an immense work, and they were in great haste to get done, they neglected to add Blue-beard to the sacred writings, which they had put in order as well as they could. To this negligence, on the part of Esdras, we ought principally to attribute those doubts which some doctors have entertained of its authenticity.

We need however only read what has been written on this subject, by St. Francis of Assise, to dispel all suspicions that may still remain concerning Blue-beard. St. Francis, who had rigorously examined it, says—“ This book bears all the marks of divine inspiration. It is a parable, or, rather, a prophecy, of the whole work of our salvation. In it I find the style of the prophets. It has the charms of the Song of

“ Songs, the miracles of the prophet Isaiah, the
“ masculine energy of Ezekiel, and all the
“ pathos of the lamentable Jeremiah. And as,
“ in the original Hebrew, there is no word or
“ phrase to be found of the Syriac language,
“ it is incontestable that the divinely inspired
“ author of Blue-beard must have flourished
“ long before the captivity.”—St. Francis
even supposes that this writer was the cotem-
porary of the prophet Samuel. This however
we dare not too positively affirm.

The name of the author of this holy book has
not descended to us; an evident token of his
modesty, in which he is in no manner equalled
by the authors of the present age. We are equally
ignorant of whom the books of Ruth, of Job,
and of Maccabeus were written by. Our holy
prophet is perhaps equal to Moses, who was the
only person the world ever saw that was able to
transmit the history of his death and burial to
posterity.

Be this as it may, let us remain satisfied with
what our celebrated commentator, Don Calmet,
says of Blue-beard. In this book is found
doctrine most salutary for the edification of the
pious soul, and prophecies which have evidently
been accomplished. These prophecies, he adds,
ought to have very great weight in proof of the
truth

truth of our holy catholic-apostolic and Roman religion. The loss to the church-militant would have been irreparable, had this precious commentary longer remained in oblivion. We are induced to publish it by more than one reason. We approach, alas! to the end of time; the great day draws near in which the vanities of vanities are to be no more. All which has been predicted is verified. Nature loses its fertility, and the human race visibly degenerates. The perversity of common sense already begins to triumph over Christian simplicity; the burning zeal for the faith is changed into criminal indifference; and new errors are victorious over ancient truths. Our holy creed is supposed to be a jargon of folly, and incredulity is proclaimed to be the effort of reason. Our enemies no longer attack us in secret; instead of mining, as formerly, they make open and violent war on the very foundations of our holy belief. Our enemies flock in multitudes to the various standards of heresy; they surround us on every side. Lucifer combats at their head, for the destruction of our worship, and our altars. The sacred church, shaken to the very foundation, menaces ruin, and is on the point of being thrown to the ground. This holy mother mourns, like a dove; she panteth like a hart,

which the pitiless hunter is about to slay! In the day of her distress she calls for her sons! It is Rachel weeping for her children, and cannot be comforted. Let us fly to afford her aid; let us prop her ancient and holy edifice with the sacred commentary of Don Calmet on Blue-beard. Let us oppose this learned Benedictin, as a bulwark, to repel the envenomed darts which impious philosophy hurls to assail us, so that the gates of hell may still not prevail against the church, which stands on the cornerstone of our salvation. May those hearts that have been hardened in sin and unbelief melt, as they read this divine commentary! And may such as have lost all spiritual delight, and are plunged in the corrupt wickedness of the age, be strengthened by Don Calmet and Blue-beard, and be convinced that, if they set their hearts on things below, if they endeavour to gratify inordinate desires, they are in danger, for these perishable goods, of rendering themselves for ever unworthy of eternal beatitude !

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A

THEOLOGICAL COMMENTARY

ON

B L U E - B E A R D,

By D O N C A L M E T.

To understand the mystical sense of this divine work, we must study it with profound attention. Though the name of the sacred author by whom it was written hath not descended to us, we may perceive, by examining the style of the original Hebrew, that he must have been a cotemporary of the prophet Samuel. His expressions are the same which are found in the Song of Songs, and some of them are equal to the phraseology of the Psalms of David. Hence

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we are enabled to conclude that he flourished long before the Babylonish captivity.

The work is written in the eastern style. It is a parable, which not only containeth the most sublime and Christian morality, but is at the same time one of the most evident prophecies of the coming of the Messiah, and of the signal victory he was to obtain, over the perpetual enemy of God and man.

The book on which we comment is a fruitful mine; the farther we dig the greater is the treasure we discover. We may apply to Blue-beard that passage in scripture which saith, the letter killeth but the spirit maketh alive. All the books of the Old Testament bear the same tokens. The fathers of the church and the doctors, who most are studied in the holy scriptures, have constantly applied themselves to find the hidden sense of the inspired writers, and often have, very successfully, by comparing passages in the different prophecies, made them explain one another. We intend to pursue this sage method, that we may make evident those divine truths, and those remarkable prophecies, which the sacred parable of Blue-beard presenteth to our meditation.

Let us observe the affecting simplicity with which he beginneth—" There once was a man,

“ who had a fine town house and a fine country house.”—Such a beginning denoteth the author to be divinely inspired. He doth not say in what year this man lived, but he saith—“ there once was a man”—He foresaw the spirit of dispute which incredulity would hereafter entertain, respecting the order of time, the chronology of the birth of Christ, his journey into Egypt, the duration of his holy ministry, and in fine the day of his death and resurrection; he therefore preferred, to all such contentious doubts, the divine simplicity of—“ There once was a man”—“ This man had a fine town house and a fine country house”—Here we behold the true style of narration. By these different possessions the holy author intimateth the wickedness of the man of whom he speaketh. He had fixed his heart on the goods of this world. He doubtless gloried in his riches, and estimated the riches of the world to come at nothing—“ He had a blue beard”—The author proceedeth step by step. This man is rich, is vain, and has a blue beard. Behold the characteristic marks of the Devil! That author of all our evil cannot have such a beard as men have. No, it must be a blue beard. This is proved by the colour of the serpent which tempted Eve in paradise, which was the devil, for it was blueish. I can prove

prove this assertion by philosophical experiment. The lamps which are kept burning with oil cast blueish rays, and the demons, which plunge the souls of the damned in vast furnaces of boiling oil, insensibly tinge their beards with this blueish colour ; as it happeneth to those who work in vitriol mines, and who in process of time have green hair.

These marks, these colours, are appropriated to the evil spirit, that men may know the enemy of their salvation. We have eyes to see, and see not. No, we examine nothing. It is our indolence, it is our lukewarmness, it is our guilty neglect, that occasion us to fall into the pits which this rebellious and malevolent spirit hath dug. We watch not for the health of our immortal souls. Who reflecteth, who careth, whether the tempter hath or hath not a blue beard? He flattereth our passions, we suffer ourselves to be overcome; we believe in him, and we are damned !

Let us examine how the parable explains this important truth—“ A lady had two daughters “ to marry, Blue-beard asked one of them for a “ wife.”—Pray remark that the Devil always addresseth himself to women. He knoweth that the fair sex is more frail than we are. Let us add that, provided the enemy of God can but obtain one,

one, it is equal to him whether it be the eldest or the youngest. He is only in search of his prey.

“ It was long before either of them could think of marrying Blue-beard, because he had already married several wives, and nobody knew what was become of them.”—Saving grace still was struggling in the hearts of these young girls, and inspired them with a secret aversion to the prince of darkness. Let us beware how we make him familiar to our sight, or soon or late our destruction is certain. We should be careful not to commit a first sin, for we shall commit a second without remorse.

“ Blue-beard took the maidens with some other young folks to one of his country houses, where nothing was to be seen but music, balls, and feasts; nothing thought of but pleasures.”—It is impossible more clearly to represent the arts of Satan, and the progress of his temptations, than they are here typified in this parable. He insinuateth the love of pleasures, splendid banquets, lascivious dancings, seductive discourse. He afterward lighteth up in us the fire of the passions, voluptuousness, the desire of riches, pride, disdain, and, step by step, thus debaucheth the servants of God. We are as it were drunken with the things of this world, which pass away, and

no longer aspire to eternal blessedness; while our unruly and destructive passions hurl us into the gulph of affliction. Such are the perfidious tricks by which Lucifer, having abandoned heaven, has contrived to people hell, which is his kingdom.

Let us pay particular attention to the rapid progres which his temptations make in innocent hearts. He won the affections of the youngest sister, who had the least experience; and, unhappily for the poor maiden, married her.

Under the name of this young bride, the sacred author meaneth to typify the Jewish people; who, forgetting the infinite benefits they had received from Jehovah, and all the miracles he had wrought in their favour, offered up sacrifice to false gods, that is to say to demons, and betook themselves to all the idolatries of the heathens. Such is the profound theology, the deep, mystical sense in which our sacred author teacheth us these sublime truths. The young maiden quitted the house of her father, to be the wife of Blue-beard; the Jews quitted the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, for Baal-phégor, and other gods, which the jaws of hell have cast upon earth. We begin by being luke-warm, we become indifferent, we forget God,

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we wallow in sin, and defile ourselves, till at last we are unable to get free, and the man is lost. The moment he is abandoned by saving grace, his senses become giddy, and he approacheth the brink of the precipice, without perceiving the abyss in which he is about to be ingulphed.

The new bride, from a fatal error, did not perceive that the bridegroom had a blue beard. And, thus hurried away by the violence of our passions, we do not perceive the monstrous deformity of vice. The sinner is wafted without rudder and compass, and becomes the sport of impetuous tempests, which finally shatter his frail bark.

“ Scarcely was Blue-beard married before he
“ went on a journey for six weeks, to look after
“ certain affairs, and desired his wife to make
“ merry in his absence”—Thus the demon, not
contented with a single prize, continually roaming
to do mischief unto men, is incessantly in
search of new prey.

“ When he departed, Blue-beard gave his
“ wife the key of all his treasures; and he gave
“ her a secret key, of a cabinet which he forbade
“ her to open.”—How many great lessons are
contained in these few words! The old seducer,
who understands the trade he hath from the ex-
perience of all ages learned, turneth the brain of

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the young woman by inspiring her with a love for riches. He attempteth to *attack* us by terrestrial and perishable goods, that he may *detach* us from the incorruptible goods of paradise. These very means he used to lead astray the wisest of kings. He gave Solomon all the gold of Ophir. Solomon with this money began to build a temple to the Lord at Jerusalem. This was making good use of his gold. But the demon was not discouraged. The wise king afterward provided himself with seven hundred concubines. The first was the use, the last the abuse. Here let us just observe the degeneracy of the human species. Where is the Sardanapalus of our age who would be sufficient for so great a number of concubines? Solomon did not stop here; we find him at length sacrificing to false gods. Thus it is that one backsliding step is followed by another. But it is time to return to the sacred text.

The key of his treasures, that Blue-beard gave his bride, is the type of the passport of hell. These are the perfidious keys which open the gate to all vices. The demon knoweth that most men are caught by the temptation of riches, which temptation he findeth few who can resist. Recollect that, when the prince of darkness had the audacity to transport the Divine Messiah to

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the top of a high mountain, he said to him—
 “ Seest thou these kingdoms of the earth ? All
 “ these will I give unto thee, if thou wilt fall
 “ down and worship me.” Miserable riches !
 Fatal grandeurs ! The destruction of those by
 whom ye are sought ! The rich cannot inherit
 the kingdom of heaven ! Oh ! ye monarchs of
 the earth, ye who with superb insolence are
 seated on your magnificent thrones, alas ! ye
 shall one day be the prey of eternal flames ;
 while the poor Lazarus, from the heaven of
 heavens, shall look down on your sufferings and
 your torments with eyes of compassion.

Let us observe, at the same time, that the demon, when he gave his keys to his bride, forbade her to open a secret cabinet. This very passage is sufficient to convince us that the book was the work of an inspired writer ; for these few words depict the perfidiousness of the demon in most lively colours. He adroitly playeth upon our passions, to subjugate us ; but he doth not wish us to know the tricks, and the arts, by which he is enabled to effect his conquest. While binding us, even with cords, he wisheth our bonds should remain invisible, and that we should not perceive we are his miserable slaves. This is the fatal cabinet which includeth these mysteries of iniquity. Here he forbiddeth his bride to enter,

and at the same time tempteth her to disobey, by exciting her curiosity.

It was by the same artifice that he betrayed our first mother. Eat, said he, of this exquisite fruit, which will teach you the knowledge of all things. You are envied the taste of it because it is excellent. Eat! It is now in your power. Oh! fatal curiosity! Dreadful abominable apple! Thou wert the loss of the whole human race!

The young bride of Blue-beard was a woman, and curious; like unto our first mother. The temptation was powerful.—Why, said she unto herself, why give me the key of this cabinet, and afterward forbid me to enter? It must be that all which my husband possesseth most rare and most precious is there inclosed. How might she resist all the enemies by whom she was surrounded! She was at once attacked by the demon of pleasure, by the demon of licentiousness, by the demon of riches, and spurred on by curiosity. She saw not the net that was spread for her, nor what its deplorable consequences must be. Alas! what power had the poor remainder of saving grace over her heart, when three parts of it had been effaced, since her abominable marriage with the prince of darkness? Grace no longer could keep possession. It forsook her, and immediately the

spirit of error clouded her senses, and reigned despotically over her.

And now behold her seize the key of the fatal cabinet. Thither she flieth, openeth the door, and entereth—Merciful God ! What a sight was presented to her view ! The mangled bodies of a number of murdered women, whose swimming blood bathed the floor. Objects so horrid inspired her with consternation and terror ! A gloomy and black melancholy filled her soul with affliction, the bandage of illusion dropt from her eyes, and, to the intoxication of deceitful pleasures, remorse, repentance and dejection succeeded.

Yet, at the very moment when she imagined herself lost, Heaven darted a ray of versatile grace, and three rays of grace concomitant*, which she had merited by repentance. Then did she perceive her crimes in all their horror. Terrible moment, which shewed her a jealous God, armed with wrath and ready to strike ! Motionless, and almost lifeless, she let the key fall—What was she to do ? Pick it up again she must; and she found it all spotted with blood. This is the innocent blood which has been shed,

* These are theological terms common among the Catholic sectaries. T.

from the righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, that crieth to Heaven for vengeance. It calleth on Adonai, who long had been deaf to the groans of the few just who remained in Israel, that he should send them the hope of all nations, and who was to overthrow the ancient enemy of God and of man.

The youthful bride was in a fearful state. Her soul sunk withia her at the sight of these bloody carcases, at the aversion which she had conceived for Blue-beard, and at the returning power of saving grace. With streaming eyes she left the horrid place! She endeavoured to wipe away the blood which spotted the fatal key; she various times endeavoured, but to no effect. So ineffaceable are our sins, and so much does it cost to wash that clean which guilt has spotted.

Blue-beard mean time was on his journey, and received intelligence that his affairs had been ended to his advantage, for the affairs of the Devil proceed with rapidity. Evil is easy, good is difficult. He returned to his palace, and immediately demanded the key of the horrible cabinet, from his wife. Oh moment of terror, for the poor woman, in which all the evils that her curiosity had drawn upon her were conjured up! Yet was that moment necessary for

for her salvation, necessary to comfort and restore her to righteousness.

Blue-beard called with a harsh voice—
 “ Where is the key of the cabinet ! ”—His young bride presented it with a trembling hand, for she already began to feel a salutary aversion to have any dealings with the Devil.—“ How “ comes it,” said Blue-beard, “ that I find “ these spots of blood on the key ? ”—“ I “ know nothing of it,” replied she, more pale than death ! —“ Very well, madam,” answered Blue-beard ; for the Devil is well bred; “ you must enter yourself, that you may make “ one among the women whom you have “ seen.”

Oh ye poor sinners ! Learn to know the evil one ! Incessantly beware of him ; be ever upon your guard ! He streweth the highway with flowers, over which he leadeth you to the gates of hell ! In the beginning, he flattereth your passions, and then suddenly transformeth himself into the tormentor of your souls, and plungeth you into a gulf of griefs. And here let us observe, with the holy fathers, how different are the ways of God and the ways of man. The moment marked out by Providence, when he intended to succour the young repentant sinner, was not yet come. That this happy moment might be

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accomplished, the Holy Spirit put the most affecting words into the mouth of the woman, capable of moving the most ferocious lions and tigers; but the demon, to whom they were addressed, was more pitiless than all the tigers on earth. He taketh no pleasure but in augmenting the number of the companions of his crimes, and in exciting those to desert who are enlisted under the banners of Christ, that he may render them the associates of his revolt, and the victims of hell.

“ You must die, madam!” cried Blue-beard—“ You must die immediately!”—Barbarous words! Which express the whole cruelty of the evil demon. But they were words of profit. They were dictated to the sacred author by the Holy Spirit, that we might be inspired with all the aversion, and horror, in which we ought to hold the prince of darkness.

“ Since I must die,” answered his distressed wife, “ grant me only one quarter of an hour.” “ I will, madam,” said Blue-beard; “ but not an instant longer.”—Oh necessary and useful moments! Moments of gold, for the fulfilling of the parable. The young bride, as we have said, signifieth the people of Israel, and her marriage with Blue-beard the idolatrous worship which this elect people paid to Baalphegor, to

Moloch,

Moloch, and to other gods. The descent of the bride into the bloody cave clearly predicted the Babylonish captivity; during which the worship of the true God had ceased, and the slavery under which the people had long groaned; subjected alternately to the Assyrians, the Egyptians, the Medes and the Romans. The return of Blue-beard, who determined to murder his wife, typifieth the last efforts of hell for the destruction of the faith, the worship and the altars of SabaOTH, the crimes which are accumulated over the face of the whole earth, the cessation of prophecies and miracles, and the miserable condition of the human race, which was soon to oblige Adonai to send his innocent son to die, for the salvation of guilty men.

But fear nothing; grace worketh; it vivifieth the young inconsolable bride, who bursteth out in these remarkable words—“ Ann! My sister! My sister, Ann! Dost thou see nobody coming?” This is as if she had said Adonai will not forsake me! However great my offences may be, I confide in his mercy! My repentance surpassteth my crimes! I know that an avenger is arming to deliver me from the yoke of Satan! My sister, Ann! Ann, my sister! Dost thou not yet see this divine Saviour coming? Alas! I have offended him; I have merited his wrath; but,

however great may be my sins, his goodness is not less infinite. When will he come whom Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel have promised the nations? He who shall crush the serpent, the seducer of the first Adam, under his feet, and to whom all men shall owe their salvation! I am born of the tribe of Judah! I am the daughter of Adonai! He who cometh for my deliverance is his son, he therefore is my brother. Ah! come dear brother! I wait for you with impatience! Ann, my sister, is he not yet coming?

Her sister Ann quickly went to the top of the castle; for we must rise superior to the filth of the world, when we wish to contemplate celestial things. And here we find the reason why the heads of beasts are inclined downward, and man only standeth erect, and looketh upward to the heavens. We know it may be answered that cocks and hens carry their heads erect, as we do. Such are but a part of the idle tales, which are invented by the incredulous; that, if it were possible, they might bring the celestial truths that are revealed unto us into discredit.

But let us return to the sacred text; let us return to sister Ann, who, according to the mystic sense of the parable, is the symbol of all the saints, and prophets, who have treated of the manner of our salvation, and of the work of redemp

redemption. As she had not fallen, like her sister, neither had sufficient grace nor saving grace abandoned her; and this was the reason that the prophetic spirit rested with her. She was continually employed concerning the root of Jesse, and the glorious destiny of the son of David, who was to be the hope of the nations, by his humility and his triumphs.

Ann cast her eyes attentively on every side. What did she behold?—"She saw the sun shine "bright, and the grass grow green."—This in the sacred language will read—"I see the sun, "who exulteth with pleasure, and rejoiceth in "the glorious coming of the Messiah! I see his "rays dispersing the dust of error, by the light "of the Gospel! I see the grass grow green.— "Or, in other words, I see it wearing the garb "of hope, and impatiently expecting the arrival "of Christ."

But the people of Israel, who are figured by the young bride, do not understand the mystical sense of the divine allegory. The Messiah, so often promised by the prophets, doth not journey fast enough to meet their eager desires. Behold, in the mean time, how the demon redoubles his efforts! His cruelty presseth him to bring his damnable enterprise to an end. Blue-beard, with a thundering voice, like unto the sounding

of the rams-horns of Jericho, bawleth aloud—
“ Come down quickly, madam, or I shall come
“ up, to murder you!”—What must she,
what could she do? She requesteth a short sus-
pension! She wisheth to wait till the hour of the
Lord be come; and in the interim she repeareth,
with a feeble voice, these pious words—“ Ann!
“ My sister! My sister Ann! Dost thou see no
“ one coming?”—Thus did the small flock
of holy souls, whom God had preserved in his
elect people, sigh with sanctified zeal after
deliverance; and feared lest the race of Abra-
ham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, devoted to the
worship of El Shadai, Adonai and Elohim,
should be exterminated by the prince of dark-
ness.

Ann again replieth—“ I see the sun shine
“ bright, and the grass grow green.”—Yes!
The Lord will keep his promise! He will not
forsake you! He sent aid to his prophet Elisha,
when the little children called after him bald-
pate! These little children were metamorphosed
into bears. It was he who drove back the Red
Sea, that his people might pass. It was he who
armed the hand of Sampson with the jaw-bone
of an ass, that he might slay the Philistines. He
will not forsake you.

But the impatience of Blue-beard redoubleth,
and

and he crieth louder than ever—“ Come down ! “ Or I will come up ! ”—By which the sacred author signifieth the abomination of the desolation in the holy city; or the triumphant entry of Pompey into Jerusalem, and the eagles and gods of the Romans erected beside the holy temple; the tower of Antonia, which the infamous Herod caused to be built, in honour of the triumvir of that name; and the labours undertaken by this king, to introduce idolatry into that land which Sabaoth has destined to be eternally inhabited by his elect people.

These important facts preceded the coming of Christ about thirty years.* Such was the astonishing precision with which the sacred author of the holy book saw and predicted the truth that, if we estimate the respite of a quarter of an hour, which Blue-beard granted his wife, allowing three years to the minute, this will exactly correspond to the space of time which passed between the taking of Jerusalem, by Pompey, to the most felicitous birth of the Messiah.

But the unhappy spouse of Blue-beard, trembling and nearly inanimate, believed her destruc-

* The king is sporting with the doubtfulnes of chronology, and therefore either disregards or purposely makes it self-contradictory, in this paragraph. T.

tion certain. Her strength almost forsook her; her voice was faint, yet did she fervently repeat the pious words—"Ann! My sister! My "sister Ann! Seest thou no one coming?"—"I "see," replied her sister, "the dust which riseth "toward the east!"—The desolate bride asked—"Is it not my brother?"—"Alas, "no!" replied Ann. "It is a flock of sheep." In this passage, let us especially remark that each word announceth some great truth. The divine author, under the type of a flock of sheep, would indicate St. John, the most happy harbinger of Jesus Christ. He had all the gentleness of sheep, and he came to announce to mankind, almost brutal in vice, the lamb without blemish and spot. Had our author beheld, with his eyes, all those things accomplished, which preceded the fortunate coming of the Messiah, he could not have related these events with more order, than he has done in this parable. It is rather a history than a prophecy. At length, we approach the very moment when the earth, in labour, is about to bring forth her Saviour. Blue-beard, or rather let us say, the Devil, furiously cometh, intending to seize his prey.

Ann, at this very moment, telleth her sister she beholdeth two horsemen, but that they are still far distant. These two horsemen are the Son and the

the Spirit; which two, indissolubly united to the Logos, compose the most holy and most adorable Trinity. When do they come? At the very time when the whole world enjoyed peace! At the time when Augustus shut up the temple of Janus! But, on the other hand, at the very time when all the powers of hell made hot war upon their Creator! When the priests, the levites, and the doctors of the law, were divided into different sects of that damnable philosophy which rose up, under the name of Pharisees, Saducees, Esseni-ans, and Therapeutes, which so effectually fap-ped, and destroyed, the faith of their forefathers, that Sabaoth had scarcely any more true adorers.

Great was the peril, and quick succour was necessary, or the young bride would have been murdered, and the church destroyed. But Sabaoth doth not forsake the faithful. At the very moment when Blue-beard raised the blade to the throat of his spouse, behold the saint of saints arriveth! Overthroweth him, and tram-pleth Lucifer under his feet! The church is saved, and hell belloweth in rage!

Behold here how infallible are the words of the sacred author. The saints and the prophets, to whom Heaven had revealed future events, foretold these events. The weakness of human reason could not penetrate the veil that covered

these

these pious truths. In order that it might be convinced, it was necessary they should be accomplished. It is the mystical sense which must be sought for, in the holy writings, or we never shall understand Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Blue-beard, nor the Song of Songs.

As soon as the two horsemen appear, behold the young bride is saved ! As soon as the Messiah came on earth, behold the Devil fettered with eternal chains ! Behold the Christian religion ever militant and ever triumphant ! It becometh permanent, and the work of our salvation is accomplished ! But let us continue our paraphrase.

The wife of the slain Blue-beard purchaseth a company for her brother. What company ? What but the flock of the faithful, which the church containeth in her bosom ! The true soldiers of Christ, ready to combat and to fight for the propagation of the faith ! Soldiers active to exterminate, by the sword, those numerous heretics, or, rather, the damned, who rebel against their holy mother, and devour her entrails ! This company, in a still more sublimely mystical sense, is an allusion to the sword given to our holy father, the pope, to revenge the cause of God, and root out his enemies. Let us continue our subject.

The widow of Blue-beard, or, rather, of Beelzebub,

zebub, is once more married, and to a very worthy man. This man is the pope. Do we not know that the church is married to the pope, who is the vicar of Jesus Christ? Though another Luther, a Calvin, a Socinus, or some other heretic of the same species, excrements of hell, as they were, should come, and though the whole herd of nonconformists were added, with an infamous crew of philosophers, as abominable as themselves, what means could they now take to rebel against the supremacy of our holy father the pope, or again to attack the dogmas of the catholic-apostolic and holy Roman faith? In vain would they exalt their souls! We shall laugh at their impotent efforts, we shall silence their blasphemies, the moment we shall expose the marvellous circumstantial accomplishment of the prophecies of the author of Blue-beard! We shall prove, to their confusion, that the widow of Blue-beard espoused the holy father; that is to say, that the church, after having abjured ancient idolatry, is become the bride of Jesus Christ, whose earthly vicar is the pope: therefore, the church is the wife of the pope.

In the first marriage of the wife of Blue-beard, all was earthly; in the second, all was spiritual. In the first, unbridled passions and fleshly pleasures were all indulged; in the second, it was

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the purification of contrition, repentance, and grace. There we behold the banquets of debauchery, the wanton look to excite impure desires, and all that luxury could produce, to stir up vanity and self-forgetfulness. Here we contemplate acts of compunction, repentance, Christian humility, and no other food but the flesh and the blood of the lamb without spot. Instead of perishable riches, and the trappings of splendour, which she found in the palace of Blue-beard, she now amasseth the treasury of good works and pious acts, the interest of which shall be abundantly paid, in Paradise. Instead of being in the arms of the demon, who would murder her, she findeth herself in the arms of the vicar of him to whom she oweth her salvation, in this life, and, in the other, eternal beatitude!

Given at the convent of Benedictines, at Monmora,
Sept. 17th, the year of Grace 1692.

(Signed) DON CALMET.

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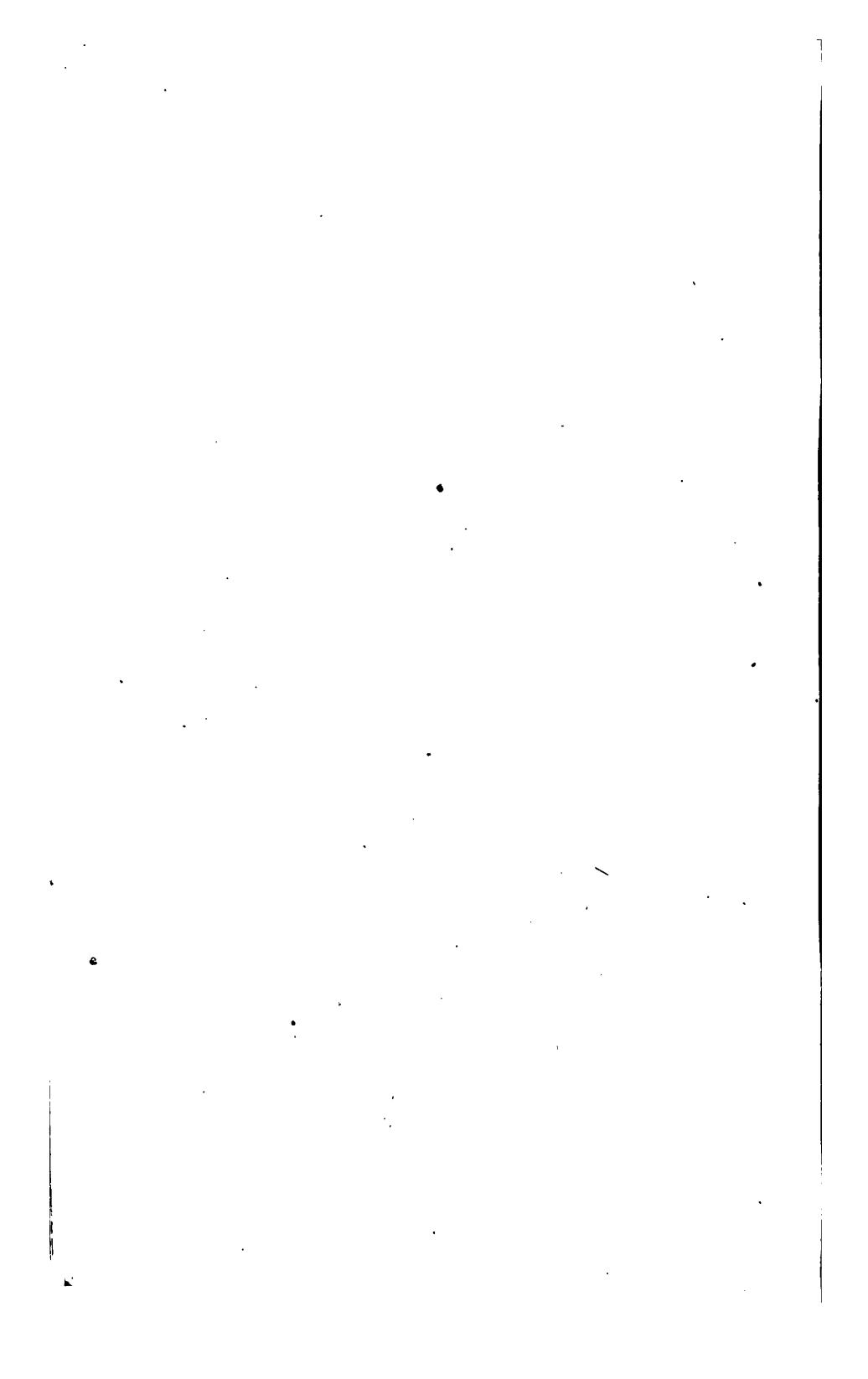
DISSERTATION

ON THE

INNOCENCE

OF

ERRORS OF THE UNDERSTANDING.



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SIR,

I Think myself obliged to render you an account of my leisure moments, and the use I make of my time. You know the love I have for philosophy: it is one of my passions, the faithful attendant on all my steps. Some friends who are acquainted with this ruling passion, either from a desire to accommodate or because they themselves take pleasure in the subject, often converse with me on speculative opinions; on physics, on metaphysics, and on morality. Their conversations, in general, contain little that is remarkable, be-

cause they turn on known topics, or such as are unworthy of the enlightened eye of the learned. The conversation I yesterday had with Philanthus appeared to me to be deserving of attention; for it was on a subject which interests, and divides, almost the whole human race.

I immediately thought of you. It seemed that I was this conversation in your debt. Returning from my walk I retired to my chamber without delay, and wrote down, as well as I was able, the recent ideas, while my mind was full of the discourse we had held. Let me intreat you, sir, to tell me your opinion; and if, fortunately, we shall coincide, your sincerity will reward me for my trouble. I shall find myself richly recompensed, if my labour be not disagreeable to you.

The day was as fine as can be imagined; the sun was more than usually splendid; the sky was so serene that not the most distant cloud could be perceived. I had passed the whole morning in study, and, that I might unbend, I took a walk with Philanthus. We conversed for some time on the happiness which men enjoy, and the insensibility of most of them, who do not taste the sweets of a clear sky, and a pure and tranquil air. Continuing to examine one proposition after another, we perceived our discourse

discourse had greatly prolonged our walk, and that it was time to return, that we might be at home before darkness came on.

Philanthus, who was the first to observe, rallied me concerning this circumstance. I defended myself by saying his conversation appeared to me so agreeable that I never noticed time, when I was in his company; and that I thought it would be soon enough to think of returning when we should see the sun descend.

How! replied he, the sun descend? Are you a disciple of Copernicus, and do you give way to the popular modes of expression, and indulge in the errors of Tycho-Brahe?

Gently, said I, you go too fast; philosophy is not concerned in familiar conversation; and, if I have sinned against Copernicus, my error ought to be as easily pardoned as that of Joshua, who stopped the sun in his course, and who, being divinely inspired, must be in the secrets of nature. Joshua at that moment spoke the language of the vulgar; for my part, I speak to an enlightened man, who will understand me, equally well let me express myself how I will. But, since you attack Tycho-Brahe, indulge me for a moment, while I assault you in return. It should seem that your zeal for Copernicus is very warm, for you begin with anathematizing those

who are of a contrary opinion. I am willing to believe he his right. But is that very certain? What proof have you? Has nature, or the Author of nature, revealed any thing to you concerning the infallibility of Copernicus? For my part, I can only perceive a system; that is to say the arrangement of the visions of Copernicus, adjusted to the operations of Nature.

I, replied Philanthus, with vivacity, perceive the truth.

What do you call the truth?

The real evidence of beings, and of facts.

And how do you know the truth?

By having found an exact agreement between the beings which really do exist, or have existed, and our ideas; between facts, past or present, and the notions we have of those facts.

Why then, my dear Philanthus, we shall have little cause to flatter ourselves with the knowledge of truths. They are most of them doubtful, and, according to the very definition that you yourself have given, there are not more than two or three truths, at the utmost, which are incontestable. The testimony of the senses, which is naturally the most certain one we possess, is not exempt from incertitude. Our eyes deceive us when they paint a distant tower round, which on approach is found to be square.

We

We sometimes imagine we hear sounds that have no existence but in our imagination, and that only consist in a deaf impression made upon our ears. The sense of smelling is not less inaccurate than the other senses. We occasionally think we smell the odour of flowers, in meadows, or in groves, which flowers are not there to be found; and, at the very moment I am speaking to you, I perceive, from the blood which starts on my hand, that I have been stung by a fly. The heat of our discourse rendered me insensible of the pain. The touch has failed in its office. Since, therefore, that which we possess least doubtful is itself so very doubtful, how can you speak with so much certitude on abstract subjects of philosophy?

Because, replied Philanthus, they are evident; and the Copernican system is confirmed by experience. The revolutions of the planets are marked with admirable precision. Eclipses are calculated with wonderful accuracy; and, in fine, this system perfectly explains the difficulties of nature.

But what would you say should you be presented with a system totally different from yours, and which, on a principle evidently false, explains the same phenomena as that of Copernicus?

I should expect the errors of the Malabars:

Nay it was of their mountain that I was going to speak. But, be it as erroneous as you please, this system, my dear Philanthus, perfectly accounts for the astronomical operations of nature; and it is astonishing that, assuming so absurd an action as that of supposing the sun entirely occupied in moving round a great mountain, which rises in the country of these barbarians, their astronomers should be as able to predict the same revolutions and the same eclipses as your Copernicus. The error of the Malabars is gross; that of Copernicus is perhaps less perceptible. We may some time behold a new philosopher, dogmatizing from the pinnacle of his own glory, and inflated with arrogance, by some unimportant discovery, but which yet may serve as the basis of a new system, who shall treat the disciples of Copernicus and of Newton as a petty swarm of wretched insects, who do not deserve to have their errors corrected.

True it is, replied Philanthus, that new philosophers have, in all ages, enjoyed the right of triumphing over their predecessors. Descartes thundered on the saints of the schools; and in return was struck dead by the bolts of Newton, who only waits a successor to undergo the same fate.

Is any thing, asked I, necessary to raise a system, except self-love? In the high idea he conceives of his own merit, an opinion of infallibility takes birth, and the philosopher forges his system. He begins by blindly believing that which he intends to prove; he searches for reasons that may impart an air of probability, and hence an inexhaustible source of error springs up. He ought, on the contrary, to begin by going back, and to proceed, by the aid of observation, from consequence to consequence; simply to examine in what they would end, and what would be the result. We should have less credulity, and should learnedly be taught to doubt, were we to follow the timid steps of circumspection.

You require angels to philosophise, warmly replied Philanthus; for where will you find a man wholly unprejudiced, perfectly impartial?

Error is, therefore, said I, our inheritance.

God forbid! answered my friend; we are formed for truth.

I will prove the contrary, if you will but listen to me with patience; and to this effect, as we are near the house, we will sit down on these benches, for I perceive you are fatigued with our walk.

Philanthus, who is not a very good walker,
and

and who had rather proceeded from absence of mind, and mechanically, than intentionally, was very well pleased to be seated: accordingly we tranquilly took our places, and I thus continued.

I have affirmed, Philanthus, that error is our inheritance, and this I mean to prove. Error has more than one source. It appears that the Creator has not designed us for the possession of much knowledge, or to make any great progress in the land of science. He has placed truths in depths too profound to be penetrated by our feeble eyes, and these depths he has surrounded by thick and thorny hedges. The road of truth presents precipices on every side. We know not which path to follow, to avoid the threatening dangers; and, if we are fortunate enough, to have escaped them, we find some labyrinth in our way where the miraculous clue of Ariadne is of no service, and from which we never can free ourselves. Some pursue an illusive phantom, by which they are fascinated, and they accept that as standard which is only counterfeit coin. They wander like those travellers who in the dark follow *ignes fatui*, by the shining of which they are allured. Others divine these so secret truths. They imagine they have rent the veil of nature, and heap conjecture on conjecture.

ture. It must be confessed that the land of conjecture is a country in which philosophers have made great conquests. Truths are placed at so great a distance that they become doubtful, and from distance itself assume an equivocal air. There is scarcely one which has not been disputed, for there is no one which has not two faces. Inspect it on one side and it appears incontestable; view it on the other and it is falsehood itself. Collect every thing which reasoning has furnished you for and against, reflect, deliberate, and weigh, and you will not know on what to determine: so true is it that the number of probabilities only gives preponderance to the opinions of men. Should some probability for or against escape them, they take the wrong side; and, as the imagination never can present both sides of the question with equal force, they are always determined by weakness, and truth remains concealed. I will imagine a town situated in a plain, and that this town is sufficiently long, but that it contains only a single street. I will farther suppose a traveller, who has never heard speak of this town, journeys toward it, and perceives its whole length; he will judge it to be immense, because he has only seen it on one side; yet his judgment will be very false,

false, for we have premised that it only contains a single street. Thus it is with truths; when we consider them individually and abstracted from other truths, we judge well of the part we consider, but we are very considerably deceived in the sum total. To obtain the knowledge of an important truth, it is previously necessary to have collected a number of simple truths, which lead to, or serve as, steps to arrive at the complicated truth of which we are in search. This is a point in which we are likewise deficient. I do not speak of conjectures, but of evident, certain, and irrevocable truth.

Speaking in a philosophic sense, we are absolutely acquainted with no one thing. We suspect there are certain truths of which we form a vague idea, and to these we attribute, by the organs of speech, certain sounds which we call scientific terms. With these sounds we satisfy our ears. Our mind imagines it understands them, yet, being well examined, they present nothing but confused ideas to the imagination; so that our philosophy is reduced to the habit, in which we have indulged ourselves, of employing obscure expressions, and terms the meaning of which we but little comprehend, and to profound meditation on effects the causes of which

which remain perfectly unknown and concealed. A wretched succession of these dreams is dignified with the fine title of supereminent philosophy, which the author announces with all the arrogance of a quack, as a discovery the most rare, and the most useful to the human race.

Does your curiosity induce you to inquire concerning this discovery? You there expect to find realities; but how unjust were your expectation! No, this error, this precious discovery is nothing more than some newly composed term, or word, more barbarous than any by which it was preceded. This new term, according to our quack, miraculously explains a certain unknown truth, and displays it more bright than day itself. But scrutinize, strip the idea of its clothing, the term by which it is covered, and nothing will remain; nothing but obscurity or positive darkness. It is scenery that shifts and disappears, and with it the illusion vanishes.

The real knowledge of truth must be very different from what I have here depicted. It must be able to indicate what all causes are; it must lead to first principles, to a knowledge of them, and to a developement of their essence. Of this Lucretius was very sensible, and it was this

this which occasioned the philosophic poet to exclaim,

*Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas.**

The number of the first principles of beings, and of the springs of nature, is either too vast, or these first principles, and springs, are too small to be seen by philosophers. Hence originate disputes concerning atoms; the infinite divisibility of matter; a vacuum, or a plenum; on motion, and on the manner in which the world is governed; each of which questions is equally thorny and never to be resolved.

Man should seem to appertain to himself. It appears to me that I am master of my person, that I search and understand myself; but I am really ignorant of myself. It is not yet decided whether I am a machine, an automaton acted on by the Creator, or whether I am a free being, independent of this Creator. I perceive that I have the power to move, yet I do not know what motion is; whether it be an accident or a substance. One doctor protests it is an accident; another swears by all his gods it is a substance. They dispute, courtiers laugh at, the lords of the earth despise, and the world in general is ignorant of them, and the cause of their quarrels.

* This, instead of Lucretius, is a line from Virgil. T.

Does it not seem to you that to employ reason on subjects so abstruse, and so incomprehensible, is to extend it beyond its proper sphere? To me it appears that our mind is incapable of knowledge so vast. We resemble men who sail in sight of land; they imagine it is the continent which moves, and do not believe that they themselves are moving. The very reverse is the truth. The land remains firm, but they are impelled by the wind.

We are continually duped by our vanity. On all things which we are unable to comprehend we bestow the epithet obscure, and all becomes unintelligible whenever it is beyond our attainment. It is however the nature of our mind which renders us incapable of great knowledge.

That there are eternal truths is indisputable; but properly to understand these truths, and to be acquainted with their smallest reasons, the memory of man ought to be increased a million fold. He should be able to apply himself entirely to the knowledge of one truth; his age should equal, nay exceed, the age of Methuselah; his life should be speculative, and fertile in experiment; and it is requisite he should be endowed with a degree of assiduity of which he is incapable. Judge, therefore, whether it were the intention of the Creator that our knowledge should

should be vast. The impediments I have stated seem to have been placed there by himself, and we are taught by experience that we have little capacity, little application; that our genius is not transcendent enough to penetrate truth, and that our memory is not sufficiently copious, or sufficiently exact, to be loaded with all the facts which are necessary to such fine but painful studies.

There is still another obstacle which prevents us from obtaining a knowledge of truth, the road to which has been obstructed by men, as if it were not of itself sufficiently difficult. The obstacle of which I speak is the prejudice of education. The majority of mankind have imbibed principles evidently false. Their physics are very defective, their metaphysics of no worth; their morality consists in sordid interest, and in an unbounded attachment to earthly things. One of their greatest virtues is that provident foresight which teaches them to think of the future, and carefully to provide subsistence for their families. You will easily perceive that the logic of such people will correspond to the rest of their philosophy; and that, consequently, it will be wretched. Their whole art of reasoning is comprised in speaking without opponents, in dogmatizing, and in not suffering any one to reply.

reply. These petty family legislators use every kind of art to inspire their offspring with the ideas which they wish to impress. Father, mother, and relations, all labour to perpetuate their errors. Great pains are taken, even while in the cradle, to give the child a full picture of the invisible bug-bear. This fine kind of instruction is usually followed with other kinds equally good. The school contributes its part. We must pass through the visionary land of Plato to arrive at the country of Aristotle ; after which, by a single bound, we leap into the world of vortices.

At leaving the school, the memory is loaded with words, and the mind with superstition, and a reverence for ancient follies. The age of reason succeeds, and either you shake off the yoke of error or become more erroneous than your forefathers. If they had lost one eye, you totally lose your sight ; if they believed certain things, because they imagined they understood them, you believe them from obstinacy. Then follows the example of so many millions of men who have adhered to opinions which hurry you away, and their suffrages are to you sufficient authority. Their numbers give weight to argument ; popular opinion makes proselytes, and is triumphant, till at length such inveterate errors become formidable because of their antiquity.

Imagine a young tree, which bends by assailing winds, but which, in time, raises its proud head to the clouds, and presents an unshaken trunk to the ax of the woodman.

“ How ! My father reasoned thus ; and for “ these sixty, or these seventy years, I have rea- “ soned the same. Is it not excessive injustice “ to desire me to begin to reason in another “ manner ? It would very well become me to go “ to school again, and to bind myself apprentice “ to your opinions ! Pray, sir, leave me to my- “ self ; I would rather crawl in a beaten path “ than rise with you, a new Icarus, in the air. “ And let me advise you to remember the fall of “ Icarus ; for such is the reward of new-fangled “ opinions, and such is the reward you have to “ expect.”

Obstinacy is often mingled with prejudice ; and a certain species of barbarism, which is called false zeal, never fails to retail its tyrannical maxims. Such are the effects of the errors of infancy, which then take a deeper root, because of the flexibility of the brain at that tender age. First impressions are the strongest ; compared to these, all the force of reason is feeble and cold.

You perceive, my dear Philanthus, that error is the inheritance of man. You are no doubt convinced,

convinced, from all that I have said, that we must be highly infatuated by our own opinions, should we suppose ourselves superior to error ; and that we ought to be firmly seated ourselves, before we should dare undertake to unhorse others.

I begin to perceive, to my great astonishment, replied Philanthus, that errors are generally invincible, when once the mind is infected by them. I have listened to you with pleasure, and with attention ; and, if I do not deceive myself, have strongly retained the causes of error which you have indicated. These are, say you, the distance at which we are obliged to contemplate truth ; the small quantity of our knowledge ; the feebleness and insufficiency of our mind ; and the prejudices of education.

Wonderfully well, Philanthus ; you have a memory really divine ; and, if God and Nature could deign to form a mortal capable of attaining their sublime truths, it would assuredly be you, who, with a memory so vast, combine an active mind and a sound judgment.

A truce to compliments, replied Philanthus ; I am better pleased with philosophic enquiries than with praises. My panegyric is not the point in question ; we have rather to make honourable amends, in the name of the pride of

all the scientific, by an humble confession of our ignorance.

I will second you with all my might, Philanthus. Whenever it is necessary to publish our cloudy and profound ignorance, my confession shall be very willingly made. Nay, indeed, I am a Pyrrhonist, and think it right that we should place but an equivocal belief in what we call the truths of experiment. You are in an excellent train, Philanthus, scepticism does not ill become you. Pyrrho at the Lyceum could not have spoken better.* I confess, said I, that I am somewhat of an academician. I consider the question on every side, I doubt, and remain undetermined. This is the sole means of guarding against error. Such scepticism will not suffer me to march with giant-strides, like Homer's god, toward truth, but it will protect me from the pitfalls of prejudice.

But why should you stand in awe of error, replied Philanthus; you who apologize for it so well?

I apologize, alas, because there are some errors ~~so agreeable~~ as to seem preferable to truth; errors that inspire us with charming dreams, that heap pleasures upon us which we enjoy not,

* Here seems to be some confusion in the Dramatis Personæ. T.

nor ever shall enjoy; errors that, to support us in adversity, and when death itself shews us the loss of all enjoyment with life, present us the prospect of a good preferable to any we have lost, and add such a torrent of delicious voluptuousness as would be capable, were it possible, of rendering even death lovely. I recollect a story which has been told me, on this subject, of a madman, which perhaps will recompense you for my long and didactic discourse.

My silence, answered Philanthus, is sufficient to inform you that I listen to you with pleasure, and that you have excited my curiosity to hear your story.

It shall be gratified, Philanthus, on condition you will promise me not to repent of having attended to my prattle.

There was a madman confined in the hospitals of Paris, who was a man of good family, and whose frenzy occasioned the most afflicting grief to all his relations. He was a man of sense, if conversing on any subject except that of his beatitude; but, this topic once mentioned, and nothing was to be heard but hosts of cherubim, seraphim, and archangels. He daily sung in a concert of immortal spirits, was honoured by beatific visions, Paradise was his abode, his

companions were angels, and celestial manna was his food.

This fortunate madman enjoyed perfect happiness in the hospital; when, very unluckily for him, a physician or surgeon came to visit the patients. The doctor proposed to cure him, and, as you may well imagine, his friends spared no promises which might induce him to surpass his art, and if possible to work miracles. In fine, to be brief, he, by phlebotomy, or other remedies, restored the madman to his understanding. The latter, highly astonished no longer to find himself in heaven, but in an apartment which was a tolerable good picture of a dungeon, and surrounded by people who had nothing angelic in their appearance, was extremely angry with the physician. I was exceedingly happy in heaven, said he, and pray what right had you to drive me thence? I wish you were condemned for your trouble, actually to people the country of the damned.

This will teach us, Philanthus, that there are fortunate errors; and I should have little trouble in proving to you that they are innocent.

I shall be glad of your proofs, said Philanthus, and, as we sup late, we still have three hours at our own disposal.

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A less time will suffice for all that I have to say; I shall not be so prodigal, either of my own moments or of your patience. You have allowed there was a period at which error was involuntary to those who were infected by it; that they thought they entertained truth, and were deceived. They were therefore excusable; for, according to their own supposition, they were certain of the truth; they acted from conviction, were imposed on by appearances, and mistook the shadow for the substance.

Again, remember that the motives of those who fall into error are laudable. They seek truth, they lose their road, and, though they never should regain it more, it is not from their want of will, but their want of guides; or, which is worse, because they have false guides. They seek truth, but their powers are insufficient to attain that which they seek. How might we blame the man who should be drowned in swimming across a very large river, if he wanted strength to gain the opposite shore? Endowed with no supernatural force, we must compassionate his mournful fate, and be sorry that a man so courageous, and capable of a generous and daring action, should not have been better succoured by Nature. His boldness will appear

worthy of a more fortunate end, and his remains will be watered with our tears.

All thinking men ought to exert themselves for the knowledge of truth, and such exertions will be worthy of them, even though they should surpass their powers. That these truths are impenetrable is, in itself, an evil sufficiently great, and ought not to be augmented by our contempt for those who suffer shipwreck, in the discovery of this new world. They are generous Argonauts, who expose themselves for the safety of their fellow-citizens; and surely it is labour sufficiently painful to wander in these imaginary regions, the air of which is not proper for our bodies, the language of which we do not understand, and where, at every step, we tread on quicksands.

We ought, Philanthus, to shew some mercy to error. It is a subtle poison which glides into our hearts, unperceived by ourselves. That I am exempt from it I can by no means be certain. I can never partake of the ridiculous pride of those infallible philosophers whose dogmas are to be respected as so many oracles. Let us be indulgent to the most palpable mistakes, and show condescension for the opinions of persons with whom we associate. Why should we disturb the gentle ties of society for the love of an opinion

nion concerning which we ourselves want conviction? Do not let us issue forth the knight-errants of unknown truths; but let each man compose a romance of his own imagination, according to his good pleasure. The ages of fabulous heroes, of miracles, and of the extravagances of chivalry, are gone by. The *Don Quixote* of Michael Cervantes still is admired; but *Pharamond*, *Orlando*, and *Amadis de Gaul*, do but incite the laughter of rational people; and those hardy knights who determine to imitate their follies will meet a similar fate.

Remark; I beseech you, that to extirpate error from the world it will be necessary to extirpate the whole human race. Be persuaded it is not our manner of thinking on speculative subjects by which the happiness of society will be influenced; but our manner of acting. Whether you be a disciple of the system of Tycho-Brahe, or of that of the Indians of Malabar, if you be but humane you will easily have my pardon; but were you the most orthodox of all doctors, if your character were rigorous, cruel, barbarous, I should everlastingly abhor you.

I entirely conform to this sentiment, answered *Philanthus*.

As we spoke, we heard an inarticulate noise, at some distance, like that of a person muttering injurious

injurious language to himself. We turned to look, and were much surprised to perceive, by the light of the moon, our almoner, who was not many paces distant, and who probably had heard the greatest part of our discourse. Ah, my good father, said I, how does it happen that we see you so late?

To-day is Saturday, replied he; I came here to compose my sermon for to-morrow, and, having heard a part of the beginning of your discourse, was induced to attend to the remainder. Would to heaven, for the welfare of my soul, I had not listened to your words! You have excited my just wrath; and, profane as you are, have insulted my ears by preferring humanity, charity, and humility to the power of the faith, and the sanctity of our creed.

Nay, be appeased, my good father; we did not touch on religious subjects; we only spoke on philosophy, and indifferent things; unless indeed you will make Tycho-Brahe and Copernicus fathers of the church. Nor can I perceive of what you have to complain.

Vain subterfuge, said he; I will preach, I will unmask you, to-morrow.

We were preparing to reply, but he hastily left us, again muttering some words which we could not distinctly understand. We withdrew
highly

highly mortified at this adventure, and greatly embarrassed concerning the measures we ought to take. It seemed to me I had said nothing which ought to have offended any person, and that what I had advanced in favour of error was conformable to reason; consequently to the principles of our most holy religion, which itself commands us mutually to support each other's failings, and not to give offence to the feeble. I felt myself absolved in my own heart, but the thing to be feared was the manner in which the subject might be viewed by zealots, and the extremities to which they, in their animosities, proceed. How capable such enthusiasts are of being prejudiced against innocence, when they interfere in spreading the alarm against those whom they hold in aversion, is well known. Philanthus endeavoured to remove my apprehensions, and we each retired, after supper, thinking as I believe on the subject of our conversation, and the unlucky accident of the priest. I immediately went to my own room, and passed the greatest part of the night in writing as much of our conversation as I could retain for your inspection.



THE
SCHOOL OF THE WORLD,
A
C O M E D Y,
IN THREE ACTS.

WRITTEN BY
MR. SATYRICUS.

To be played incognito.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

BARDUS, the Father.

Young BARDUS, a Student returned from the University.

ARGAN, the Father of Julia.

MONDOR, the Lover of Julia.

MARTIN, the Valet of Young Bardus.

MERLIN, the Valet of Mondor.

Madam ARGAN.

JULIA, her Daughter.

NERINA, the Maid of Madam Argan.

The S C E N E is *Berlin*, at a House inhabited by several Families.

THE
SCHOOL OF THE WORLD.

A C T I.

S C E N E I.

MARTIN, NERINA.

MARTIN.

I Wish I could meet with somebody that belongs to the house, that I might see what measures ought to be taken, before we come and pay our respects to Mr. Bardus—Egad ! here comes Nerina, just in right time.—Good morrow, child. (*To Nerina*) Thou canst not imagine how impatient I have been to see thee once again !

NERINA.

So indeed it should seem ; for you and your master have been returned from the university two days, and this is the first sight I have had of your worship.

MARTIN.

Who the plague can have told thee, now, that we have been here these two days ?

NERINA.

I should be glad to know what secrets there are, in this world, which woman's curiosity cannot discover. We stumble upon them while we are seeking them. When Sukey and Sally and Dolly and Margery meet, they all begin to tattle ; each tells the tale of her neighbourhood, and thus the whole history of the town is known. I hope you are now satisfied that I am acquainted with every thing which happens.

MARTIN.

Indeed !—Well, since thou knowest all, I'll—I'll tell thee the rest—on condition thou wilt not betray my master. His father will never forgive him !

NERINA.

I have a deal of curiosity, but no malice. I do not trouble myself with thy master's freaks. Thou

Thou knowest that his father, Mr. Bardus, has been waiting for him these two days, to betroth him to my mistress; but, however little I concern myself with the master, I am not quite so indifferent about the man.

MARTIN.

Why, indeed, I think there is a difference!—As to my master, he studies nature—he studies—the university—He—As for myself, I only study how to please thee. While he has been galloping on the high road of gallantry, I have stood still, and have continued thy faithful slave; nay I have even thought of thee, and thee only, when I have stolen a kiss from some other pretty girl.

NERINA.

A very faithful lover, indeed!

MARTIN.

After he came, two days since, to lodge with the officious Mrs. La Roche, I have not dared to stir out, lest his father should have caught a glance of me. I even tremble at present, though there is no danger; for, as I am equipped like a traveller, and as my master intends to make his appearance at home to-day, I run no risk.

NERINA.

Allow me to tell you, Mr. Martin, that Mrs. La Roche is no favourite of mine.

MARTIN.

And why so, my beauty?—Oh, there is nothing like gallantry!—We valets should be thought very great blockheads if we were not gallant. Then only think how great an honour it will be to thee to say, Mr. Martin has sacrificed a whole bead-roll of belles, who were all in despair, to behold the triumph of my superior charms.

NERINA.

My humble service to your sacrifice, it is not at all to my taste. I assure you, sir, I like constancy in love. But you have been spoiled at the university, Mr. Martin; and, I dare venture to prophesy, your master has very industriously applied himself to learn all the vile tricks of his vile rakish companions, and that he is come back a very well informed youth.

MARTIN.

And whence dost thou gather that, child?

NERINA.

From the old proverb—“Like master like man.”—I hear somebody coming. Oh! it is the old

old gentleman. Begone, and bring young Mr. Bardus.

S C E N E II.

NERINA, BARDUS, ARGAN.

BARDUS.

I own, I cannot understand the reason of this delay—Perhaps he has been so deep in study, and has set up so many days and nights, that he has fallen ill!—Perhaps some accident has happened to him on the road!—Perhaps the professors and doctors would not allow him to depart, till he had first finished some course of experimental philosophy, which the college had begun.—I ought to have sent to the post-office to have enquired if there are any letters.

ARGAN.

Here is Nerina, she can give orders.

NERINA.

Yes, sir, I'll give orders, immediately.

[Exit Nerina.

S C E N E III.

BARDUS, ARGAN.

ARGAN.

I participate your inquietude, and can very well

well conceive how much you must be affected, by the least delay in the arrival of a beloved and an only son; a son in whom you have placed all your hopes.

BARDUS.

And with good reason, sir. He is the very picture of me! He was a promising child from his most early infancy. Why, sir, before he was eight years old, he knew all his letters. He was no bell-wether among boys, but the gentlest sheep in the flock, and could have written you the abracadabra to cure the ague before he was fifteen.

ARGAN.

But wherefore make him apply to so barren a study?

BARDUS.

Barren!—A barren study!—Really, my worthy friend, you are very ignorant. What is so profound as rabbinistical erudition? What gives a work so learned an air as citations from your Jewish rabbi? Not that I confine my son to these studies. I have made him pore over Cujacius and Bartolius, physics and metaphysics, definites and indefinites, fluxions and—

ARGAN.

Metaphysics seems to me a science very little proper

proper for youth ; it is but teaching the history of a chimerical country, never yet inhabited, nor ever to be inhabited, by men. I do not pretend to condemn your taste, yet the belles lettres—

BARDUS.

Pho!—Belles lettres!—None of your every day learning for me. Your little wits, who learn to sip tea and please the ladies, only apply themselves to the belles lettres. What were Virgil and Homer, or Cicero himself? Why, sir, not worthy to wipe the dust from the shoes of Plato. Nay, even Plato, great as he was, not having learned algebra, was infinitely beneath the most learned Leibnitz, and his disciples.

ARGAN.

In this I own I differ with you. In my opinion, the belles lettres are exceedingly necessary for a man of the world, and who is intended to take any part in affairs of moment. Eloquence is requisite for a young man ; and, in order to converse with eloquence, his memory should be well stored, from the best writings of the ancients and moderns. The belles lettres polish discourse ; and, as the chief art of life is to please, a youth of genius will certainly be more successful, when he shall utter a witty re-

mark from Horace, than should he declaim on a theorem of Archimedes.

BARDUS.

My very good friend—I am sorry to hear you !—You are spoiled !—You have studied what requires nothing but—

ARGAN.

But genius !

BARDUS.

For our parts, we despise things so frivolous ! We are the scrutineers of nature ! We sink to the bottom ; you slide over the surface ! With our calculations on one hand, and our metaphysical systems on the other, we wrest that from the Author of the universe which it was his intention to conceal from man. You arrange phrases ; we seek truths. The search is characteristic of us great men. We are the passionate lovers of truth, and are for ever occupied in discovering new truth.

ARGAN.

Which, when you have discovered, you are very apt to wrangle about, and deny.

BARDUS.

Some of us are, I grant you ; but they are blockheads.

ARGAN.

ARGAN.

And who shall answer for the infallibility of the remainder?

BARDUS.

Calculation; algebra.

ARGAN.

And has your son been taught——

BARDUS.

Taught! — Sir, my son has been taught the Latin, the Greek, the Hebrew, the Syriac, the Coptic, and the elements of the Chinese; that, by being able to write in all these languages, he might correspond in all, to the utility of the state.

ARGAN.

I cannot well perceive how a correspondence in Coptic can be of utility to the trade or politics of Prussia; nay I even doubt whether algebra be necessary.*

BARDUS.

Is it possible for man to be so blind! — What! sir, can you not perceive that the kingdom, and

* There can be little cause to fear but that the reader will pardon, if not approve, the softening of passages in which a science so admirable as that of algebra is attempted to be ridiculed. T.

the world in general, are only so ill governed because your people, who interfere in politics, are ignorant to such a degree that they are neither acquainted with Euclid nor algebra; know nothing of the *reductio ad absurdum*, and have not studied the corollary of *the adequate cause*?

ARGAN.

My dear Mr. Bardus, your scientific knowledge leads you to extravagance. Reflect again. Govern a kingdom by algebraic equations! We require prudence, penetration, wisdom, and above all things, justice from our governors. We wish the sovereign and his counsellors to have a sincere love for their country; to know and to remedy evil; equally to avoid ambition and impotence; to maintain the people in peace, yet not suffer the temerity of a neighbour to degrade the majesty of the state; to renounce all partiality; to recompense virtue and punish vice, without respect to persons; and, by their benevolence, to afford the last resource to the unhappy, who seem at once to be persecuted by nature and fortune. What need of algebra to govern or to advise in this manner?

BARDUS.

Sir, there is great need. Algebraic equation is the only road on which we can travel toward the

the land of truth.—Its steps serve us as guide-posts. It gives method to the mind, and prevents all who are acquainted with this divine science from wandering.—Take my advice; have your daughter taught algebra instantly.

ARGAN.

Though you wish I should marry my daughter to your son, I cannot see the need they will have of algebra for the propagation of children.

BARDUS.

Sir, it is necessary for all things.—My very heart palpitates with pleasure, when I think of the learned little race they are about to beget.

ARGAN.

Gently, sir, gently.—I have only engaged my word, on condition Julia consents to the marriage; but, if she be averse to it, I plainly declare I am not barbarous enough to force her inclinations.

BARDUS.

How! Sir! Are you a father, and will you ask your daughter's consent for her marriage? Are not you master of your own house? A very pleasant kind of complaisance indeed! My son, sir, shall marry the wife I please to give him.

ARGAN.

ARGAN.

The philosophy which I admire is, not that which employs itself in vain speculation, but, that which practises good and sound morality. If Nature has committed our children to our government, it was not that we should abuse our power. We are their earliest friends, not their tyrants. Julia has been well educated, has no bad propensities, and is come to the age of discretion ; she therefore best can tell whether she can subject herself during life to your son, or whether she feels a repugnance to the match. Forced marriages have often rendered the virtuous heart vicious. Heaven preserve me from becoming the accomplice of crimes which an unhappy marriage might oblige my daughter to commit !

BARDUS.

Ha ! Very moral to be sure, and very much to the purpose !—Why, sir, do you recollect that my son, at my decease, is to enjoy six thousand good crowns a year ? Where will you find another son-in-law so rich ?

ARGAN.

And must we ever prefer the most wealthy ?

BARDUS.

I suspect you are inclined to favour this Mondor !

dor! An empty fellow, who is every moment citing Virgil and Boileau! Nay, if I am to believe scandal, Miss Julia herself takes pleasure in his sentiments, his taste, his feelings, and all that abominable jargon which your wits continually rehearse, and to which I neither do nor ever wish to listen.

ARGAN.

But why so hot? Your bile, considering it passes through a philosophic cooler, easily evaporates. I have told you, and I tell you again, I shall not oppose the wishes of your son; but neither will I lay any constraint on my daughter. All that I can do to serve you is to speak to her, and to prepare her for the arrival of young Mr. Bardus; and, as the business is by no means pressing, let them become acquainted with each other before they marry. You have beside told me the wedding was not to take place till your son should return from his travels.

BARDUS.

Very true, but let them be affianced.

ARGAN.

Well, well, I will go and speak to Julia, and consult my wife; and, should your son arrive, you may bring him if you please.

S C E N E

S C E N E III.

BARDUS (*alone*).

This is what you call a good kind of man! Ah! He affords a picture of the whole race who crawl on the surface of this silly earth. We, whom philosophy elevates to the empyrean, scarcely can perceive such insects; yet their feeble reasoning, and their dry sterile morality, with which they bedeck themselves, inflate their self-love even till they imagine themselves our equals. Thanks to the care which I have taken of the education of my son; he will be a very different being. Yes, Newton, Leibnitz, and thou, subtle Malebranche, expect a rival, who shall surpass you all.—But who comes here?

S C E N E IV.

BARDUS, MARTIN.

BARDUS.

Ah! Art thou there, Martin! Where is thy master?

MARTIN.

Oh! sir, we are so wearied with travelling! —Your son sends to request permission to pay his respects to you.

BARDUS.

BARDUS.

Very complimentary indeed! — Let him enter.

MARTIN.

Immediately, sir. (Exit.)

BARDUS.

He is respectful, and attentive to his father. This it is to have a son well educated.

S C E N E V.

BARDUS, Young BARDUS, MARTIN.

BARDUS.

Sole hopes of my family, perfect image of thy father, and my dear son, come to my arms. Let me embrace thee! (They kiss.) Well, and how go the monads? (Young Bardus appears embarrassed.)

MARTIN (with a complimentary bow):

Sir, they are your very humble servants.

BARDUS.

I did not speak to thee! (To his Son.) Why don't you answer? How go the monads?

YOUNG BARDUS.

Sir! — They are — as they ever have been — a — a — in very great esteem.

MARTIN.

MARTIN.

Oh, yes, sir ; we esteem them very highly.

BARDUS.

And hast thou gone through a whole course
of them, in thy studies ?

YOUNG BARDUS.

Sir, the—the—the monads—

MARTIN.

Yes, sir, the monads are— are prodigiously
dear.

BARDUS.

The monads prodigiously dear ! What does
all this mean ?

YOUNG BARDUS.

It means, sir—

MARTIN.

Yes, sir, the meaning is plain : they would
have sold them to us at too dear a rate.

BARDUS.

Plain !—So plain that I don't understand a
word of what you are saying.

YOUNG BARDUS.

The professor, sir—sells them too dear.

MARTIN.

Yes, sir, the price of one was so high it was not possible to purchase.

BARDUS.

I really don't understand!—Dr. Diffusus, my very good friend, promised to instruct and initiate thee in our metaphysical mysteries.—Pray has he not yet written an answer to the good for nothing work which refutes his system?

MARTIN.

He is at this very moment, sir, at a quotation from his twenty-four first volumes in folio, and he has a cart-load of *corollaries*, *tbromums*, and *problematics*, to put in order.

BARDUS.

I was not speaking to thee, Ignoramus!—but to thy master.

YOUNG BARDUS.

He works very hard, sir, and his daughter has continually told me that he was employed in writing a refutation.

BARDUS.

But—How! Haft thou lived two years at Halle without knowing the whole history of all the refutations that are there written?

YOUNG

YOUNG BARDUS.

Sir, I have applied myself so very closely—to my studies—that I have known nothing of what was passing, except what your letters have informed me.

MARTIN.

Oh, yes, sir, we have studied—day and night.

BARDUS.

And hast thou taken lessons from the daughter instead of the father? That great man, the honour of Germany, and of the human race!

YOUNG BARDUS.

I assure you, sir, I have followed your instructions, and have written down all I have learned.

MARTIN.

Yes, sir, we have written *all we have learned*. Our knowledge is all packed up in the portmanteau, which when we have emptied you will find whom you have to talk to. We are armed at all points. Oh! what a pleasure, sir, will it be to you to maintain—a *thesorum* with my young master! Our renown is not a little; unless you had been present, you could not have believed we could have got such characters!

BARDUS.

BARDUS.

So much the better—Thou knowest, my son, that my most tender cares have all been employed for thy good. I have not only thought of making thee a scholar but have chosen thee a wife; young, beautiful, and lovely; a little coquettish, to be sure; to whom I wish to affiance thee, and whom thou art to marry, on thy return from thy travels. In the afternoon, I shall present thee to the family, and hope thou wilt second my views; for, beside all I have told thee, she is rich.

YOUNG BARDUS (*bowing profoundly*).

Sir!—

BARDUS.

We shall soon have a young philosopher.

YOUNG BARDUS.

Sir!—

BARDUS.

And my house will itself become an academy of sciences!

YOUNG BARDUS.

Sir—The honour, the satisfaction, and the pleasure—as well as the respect, and the content—

BARDUS.

Thou art to marry her on thy return; I dine
vol. v. S to-day

to-day with my friend Fabricius, whither I wish thee to come with me. But I must go and fetch a work in manuscript, which I have written in Latin, and which I have promised him the pleasure of reading to him after dinner.

YOUNG BARDUS.

Sir, I am all obedience.

S C E N E VI.

YOUNG BARDUS, MARTIN.

YOUNG BARDUS.

The devil take the——Did ever the hundred and ten millions of demons of the lowest of the bottomless pits behold so insupportable a pedant? Fire, fiends and faggots! May the infernal Beelzebub fly away with me in a flash of wild fire if I knew what to answer him, when he talked of his diabolical monads.

MARTIN.

Very true, my dear master; we ought to have followed our studies a little closer. I have often told you that by raking all night, drinking all day, debauching young girls when we had nothing better to do, and fighting when we had lost all our money at the gaming table, we should meet with but a so-so welcome at home.

YOUNG

YOUNG BARDUS.

Pretty well, hitherto; but his confounded pedantry puzzled me. He put me to the torture, with his devilish monads.

MARTIN.

Yes, if it had not been for me—

YOUNG BARDUS.

If he questions me farther, I am undone.

MARTIN.

Tell me the title of some book, that treats on these things; I will buy it, and you may study what they mean.

YOUNG BARDUS.

Buy it? Where is the money?—What a life have we led!

MARTIN.

You spent your last crown at the house of madame La Roche. That wicked Caroline emptied your pockets.

YOUNG BARDUS.

"Sdeath! Mention madame La Roche again and I'll strangle thee!

MARTIN.

Oh! Sir, I shall have no opportunity; your father means to marry you.

YOUNG BARDUS.

What will Adelaide, Chloe, Cephisa, and Melanida say; Margaretta too, for whom I wrote that elegy?

MARTIN.

Poor girls, they will all be in despair! For where will they find a beau equal to my master?

YOUNG BARDUS.

I fancy, rascal, thou meanest to laugh at me; but I believe my superior will not easily be found. Woman never yet said me nay!

MARTIN.

There are women of various kinds, sir. The ladies to whom you have paid your addresses were never remarkable for their cruelty. But if you were to attack these virtuous misses now, with all their prim airs and old fashioned notions, you would find it a very different kind of affair.

YOUNG BARDUS.

Pshaw! Blockhead!—Wherever I pay my addresses I shall find no such thing.

MARTIN.

There is my Nerina has held out ever since I have known her.

YOUNG

YOUNG BARDUS.

A pretty comparison, truly, between such a
booby, as thou art, and a gentleman, like
myself.

MARTIN.

Oh ! To be sure, sir !—But we are not without
our merit; and, when examined by the ladies,
the man is often preferred to the master.

YOUNG BARDUS.

Is not it time to follow my father?

MARTIN.

It is my opinion you are already in love with
your wife that is to be. Your eagerness leads
me to suspect your blood has warmed itself by
the fire of your fancy.

YOUNG BARDUS.

Fool ! How couldst thou suppose me in love?
I who only delight in roving, and in leading
numerous beauties enchain'd to my triumphant
car.

MARTIN.

You must take a wife, one time or another.

YOUNG BARDUS.

To be sure. Take a wife, spend her estate
in the company of her rivals, and live separate
when the money is all gone.

S 3

MARTIN.

MARTIN.

Truly, sir, this is not a very honest plan. Have you no shame to think of ruining a person who never did you any ill? How good you were when you left this place! And what need was there to send you to the University, where bad example, continual dissipation, unbounded licentiousness—

YOUNG BARDUS.

Silence, scoundrel. Millions of devils! Who ever saw so impertinent a rascal! By this good light, if thou continuest to reason thus with me, may Belial and Ashtaroth fly away with me if I don't strangle thee! Follow me; it is time to join my father.

MARTIN.

There will be an ill end to this, either for him or me.

END OF ACT I.

A C T II.

S C E N E I.

JULIA and NERINA.

JULIA.

I KNOW not how to act ! I am willing to sacrifice every thing ; life, love, and all.

NERINA.

But why are you in such haste, madam ? You know how good, how gentle, your father is. He certainly will not force you. When he speaks in behalf of young Bardus, you have only to tell him he does not please you, and that your heart pleads for Mondor.

JULIA.

Though my heart may be subject to weakness, it must be subdued by my reason. A father so good, so respectable as mine has a claim to perfect obedience from his children ; and I am convinced that by obedience, and by committing myself blindly to be guided by him, I shall secure my own happiness.

S 4

NERINA.

NERINA.

Very sentimental, indeed, madam; and quite in the style of the heroine. But let us descend from our stilts, if you please, and speak a little like people of common sense of a marriage by which the destiny of your future life is to be determined. For my own part, I have no inclination to see you studying the Coptic. A husband who is going to travel and leave his bride would not please me; and young Mondor, in my opinion, is a very different person. One fruit is fit to pluck, the other is as sour as a crab.

JULIA.

It would not be his travels that would induce me to refuse him—But shall I afflict my father?

NERINA.

Poor Mondor! Yes, you will follow him to his grave. You strike a dagger through his heart!—Really, my dear, my good lady, you surely cannot make the most amiable gentleman in all Berlin thus miserable.

JULIA.

How wouldest thou have me act?

NERINA.

I would have you candidly, and respectfully, confess to your father that you love Mondor.

JULIA.

JULIA.

And, should I anger him, I should be inconsolable.

NERINA.

Your father is too fond of you, madam, to be angry ; and the thing itself is too reasonable —But here comes Mondor himself.

S C E N E II.

JULIA, NERINA, MONDOR.

MONDOR.

Good Heaven ! madam, can what I have heard be true ? Am I for ever to lose you ?

JULIA.

Nerina has related to me the conversation, sir, which has passed between my father and Mr. Bardus ; and she tells me my hand is to be given to that gentleman's son.

MONDOR.

And do you consent, madam ?

JULIA.

My father has not yet spoken to me on the subject ; but you know, sir, that duty leaves a daughter no choice : her only merit is obedience.

MONDOR.

MONDOR.

Can you, then, consent to see me wretched, and render yourself the accomplice of my misery? You will be my destruction, madam. Not reason, not virtue itself can resist this stroke! To the beauty of your person, the purity of your heart, and the charms of your understanding, my love has been a willing victim; and, unworthy as I am of possessing, I have dared to aspire to this supreme happiness. The heart is too easily persuaded that every thing which it so fervently desires is possible. I have seen, heard, breathed, and existed only for you; and in one fatal moment my love and my virtue must expire together; for not all the respect I owe you, madam, can prevent me from taking vengeance on the happy mortal by whom I am supplanted. Having lost you, what have I farther to lose? Life would be a burthen, and death is all I have to hope. (*Mondor sinks into a state of profound dejection.*)

JULIA,

Were I the mistress of my own fate, our destinies would be for ever united. Your understanding, your virtues, and your talents, compensate the injustice which fortune has done you. I am not desirous of wealth, every wish of my heart would be satisfied by

being yours; and, I once more repeat, if I have any weakness to reproach myself with, it is my love of you. I have heard my lover applauded by the whole world, I have felt inclinations which reason has approved, and an impulse which I was unable to resist. Yet permit me, while I thus confess my weakness, to prove to you the power which a dutiful daughter can obtain over her passions, and to convince you that I am determined to stifle these sensations, even though the effort should cost me my life. My father shall be obeyed; and if you obtain my hand it must be with his and my mother's consent. I prefer you to all mankind, but I prefer my duty even to you.

MONDOR.

Who ever yet beheld a mind so pure and a form so lovely! You confound me, madam. You redouble my passion, you inflame it to indescribable excess! I adore yet must lose you.—No, every effort shall be employed—I will venture to ask your hand from your parents.

NERINA.

I see but one difficulty.

MONDOR.

What is that?

NERINA.

NERINA.

The want of wealth.

MONDOR.

Despicable consideration!

NERINA.

But of great weight with madam Argan. This
is the point to be attended to.

MONDOR.

My hopes are all founded on my generous
Julia; without her I am undone.

JULIA.

Everything that honour will permit I will do;
but endeavour to gain my mother's favour.

NERINA.

I hear somebody coming. Begone, lest you
should be found together.

MONDOR (*going*).

Yes, beauteous Julia, you are the whole world
to me; my tutelary deity! All my hopes are
placed in you.

SCENE

S C E N E III.

JULIA, NERINA, and afterward Mrs. ARGAN,
who enters in an indolent manner.

NERINA.

Here comes your mother; I will speak to her
of our affairs.

JULIA.

By no means.

NERINA.

Let me alone, I know her.—(*To Mrs. Argan*)
Is your head-ach better, madam?

MRS. ARGAN.

Illness and affliction, child, arrive post haste,
but are in no hurry to depart; and, however
carefully we nurse ourselves, they are very loath
to leave us.—That vile centinel at the corner of
our street will be the death of me, one of these
days, with his eternal—*Who goes there?*—An
arm chair! An arm chair, girl! (*Nerina brings
a chair, and Mrs. Argan seats herself indolently*)
I am scarcely able to sit up!

NERINA.

I thought you were to have visitors to-day,
madam.

MRS.

MRS. ARGAN (*to Julia with severity*).

Stand upright, miss. (*To Nerina*) Yes, young Mr. Bardus is arrived from the university. (*To Julia in the same tone*) Let your shoulders fall! (*To Nerina*) And he is to come to see me.

NERINA.

People say he is to marry my young lady, but I am sure you cannot wish she should be locked up all her life in a library; that would be too ridiculous.

MRS. ARGAN.

Why so? A husband must be found; and he may do just as well as another.

NERINA.

You are certainly joking, madam. You would not have a son-in-law of marble, newly displaced from the niche of some college; or see this old Mr. Bardus continually at your heels, with his Greek, Latin, and philosophy, with which he persecutes the whole town.

MRS. ARGAN.

Oh, he is a very learned man!

NERINA.

It was but t'other day, after he had been with my master, that he met me on the stairs, and asked

asked me if I could tell him who was the best mathematical instrument maker. I said I knew nothing of the matter. Oh, child, said he, there is no happiness but in philosophy. The search of truth is the felicity of mankind, and thou must immediately begin thy studies. I made him a curtsey, and told him I was his very humble servant, but that I referred him for learning to my master; and he continued repeating his strange jargon till I was out of hearing.

MRS. ARGAN.

What did he say?

NERINA.

Really, madam, that is more than I can tell. He talked something about a void, and an abyfs, and nature;—and—and I don't know what nonsense of the same kind. It is also very true that all the books which he pretends to write himself are written by the fat professor he maintains.

MRS. ARGAN,

What of that? We cannot do every thing ourselves!—He has money, and that will set Julia at her ease.

NERINA.

But is it money, madam, which makes marriages happy?

MRS.

MRS. ARGAN.

To be sure ! When my husband was proposed to me, the first question I asked was—How much has he a year ? And I certainly should not have married him if, after an exact calculation, I had not found that I might live in a better style than madam Glaffcoach, whose equipage by no means equals mine ; than Mrs. Milk sop, who it is well known keeps a very bad table ; or than my lady Odd-trick, who cannot play so high as I do.

NERINA.

Nay, but madam, my master, your husband, has so many excellent qualities that—

MRS. ARGAN.

Nonsense, child ! Excellent qualities in a man indeed ! We must eat and drink, and have all our wants and wishes gratified ; that is the chief thing ! Consuming our time in fatigue and anxiety is not life. Fools only think in that silly manner. I thank Heaven, I have always eclipsed the first people in the neighbourhood ; and a great many ladies, who have been my rivals, have fallen ill with vexation, at perceiving my superiority !

NERINA.

I can dream of nothing but the marriage of your daughter. A fancy has just struck me—

There is Mr. Mondor, now, is a most charming and amiable young man; and I think, madam, would suit your purpose much better than young Bardus.

MRS. ARGAN.

Mondor! He has nothing to live on; he is as poor as a poet.

NERINA.

But your people who have so much wit often make their fortunes. (*Aside to Julia*) Speak, madam.

JULIA.

He has a deal of respect for you, madam.

MRS. ARGAN.

What care I for his respect?

JULIA.

He can tell you the most amusing and the prettiest tales—

MRS. ARGAN.

Tales, indeed! Why he does not know how to play a hand at quadrille!

JULIA.

He would do any thing to please you.

MRS. ARGAN.

Prithee, child, do not distract my brain, with thy nonsense. Here comes thy father; retire.

S C E N E IV.

Mr. *and* Mrs. ARGAN. Mrs. ARGAN continues seated in her arm chair, and speaks, taking but little notice of her husband.

MRS. ARGAN.

Well, my dear; what's the matter?

MR. ARGAN.

I am come to speak to you concerning our daughter. Mr. Bardus requests her in marriage for his son.

MRS. ARGAN.

He is rich, and that is sufficient. I have long thought of bestowing her on young Mr. Bardus; but she does not deserve so good a husband.

MR. ARGAN.

I am satisfied with him; as I likewise am to find my daughter so reasonable.

MRS. ARGAN.

Reasonable! Reasonable, indeed! Surely, my dear, you rave! Reasonable! Why does not she sit up sometimes till midnight, at your ridottos?

Does

Does not she frequent your operas, and concerts, and—

MR. ARGAN.

I see no harm in that. Would you wish a girl to have the same pleasures and inclinations as an old woman.

MRS. ARGAN.

Oh! To be sure! Yes, I am old; but you took me when I was young, sir; and, as I know not how better to dispose of myself, you must keep me as I am!

MR. ARGAN.

I said nothing about your age, my dear; I merely observed that a girl of eighteen cannot be expected to sit still the whole day, and that there are certain pleasures she ought to be allowed to take.

MRS. ARGAN.

It is horribly fatiguing to take such kind of pleasure. I went indeed, once in my life, to the opera, but I made a vow they should never catch me there again; I was sick to death, and did not leave my bed for three weeks! These monstrous fatigues are the death of people! I must be in bed and asleep a quarter before ten, or I cannot exist. My daughter is wholly dif-

T 2 ferent.

ferent. She takes after you, for which reason I always call her your daughter. But my son, the lieutenant, he is my own picture. The poor boy ! My second self !

MR. ARGAN.

I am not very fond of such kind of remarks. If they be but good it matters little whether children resemble the father or the mother.

MRS. ARGAN.

Ah, poor Christopher ! Obliged to mount guard regularly once a week ! His health will be ruined, at that vile garrison. I have sent him some of my own coffee, some of the best green tea, some chintz, the pattern of my own Polonoise to make him a morning-gown, and an excellent warm cotton night-cap. Poor child ! He is not suffered to undress himself, when he is on guard ! Only think of that, my dear ! Obliged to sleep all night in his clothes !

MR. ARGAN.

He must do his duty, and I shall be glad to see him a good officer ; but I am afraid, my dear, you will spoil him, by rendering him tender and effeminate.

MRS. ARGAN.

I spoil the child ! Yes, to be sure, I shall spoil

spoil him, because I don't wish his death. Recollect, I tell you, once again, I have paid the debts he was obliged to contract.

MR. ARGAN.

I hear of his proceedings; he is an idle debauchee, and you encourage him in his vices.

MRS. ARGAN.

I have a design in my head, my dear, which I wanted to inform you of. I mean to send him into the Dutch service. My sister, who has married a burgomaster of Rotterdam, has promised to obtain him a company.

MR. ARGAN.

Never—I will never suffer any such thing, wife. We are the property of our country; to that we appertain, and that we ought to defend. For who will defend it should we refuse? We are never permitted to serve a foreign state, except our own country refuses to acknowledge us as her children, or will not afford us employment.

MRS. ARGAN.

But this Prussian service is so severe; there is so much exactness to be observed: whereas in Holland, they tell me, they do just what they please.

MR. ARGAN.

For which reason, the officers here serve with honour, and are crowned with glory ; and there, for want of being disciplined, they have lost their reputation. In a word, I will never give my consent. A silly boy, like my son, ought to be corrected of his freaks in a subaltern station, that when he shall obtain higher rank he may bring with him a ripened and well informed mind. But, to return to Julia—You wish then—

MRS. ARGAN.

I wish, and I will have her marry young Bardus,

MR. ARGAN.

Have you consulted her on the subject ?

MRS. ARGAN.

Consult her, indeed ! That is not at all necessary.

MR. ARGAN.

I think it exceedingly necessary ; and will go immediately to know her thoughts.

S C E N E V.

MRS. ARGAN (*alone*).

Poor man ! I am obliged to guide thee, for
I bleſs

I bless heaven I am mistress in my own house :
but it gives me a deal of trouble ; and I detest
trouble. My daughter shall have the husband I
please, and I will do just as I like with my son,
in spite of —

S C E N E VI.

MRS. ARGAN, NERINA.

NERINA.

Here is a gentleman below, madam, who asks
to speak to you. I should suppose, from his
appearance, it is our student. Mr. Mondor,
too, requests a moment's audience.

MRS. ARGAN.

Let them come up. People are very trou-
blesome in this world. The cares of a family
are insupportable. A marriageable daughter
makes a greater din in a house than midnight
cats in gutters. One is teized by every silly fop
in town. I wish she was off my hands.

S C E N E VII.

MRS. ARGAN, YOUNG BARDUS, MONDOR,
NERINA.YOUNG BARDUS (*to Nerina entering*).

Come hither, my little puppet ; my university

bird. It is great pity, my dear, that I have not studied under thee.

MERINA,

You must address yourself, sir, if you please, to my mistress. I believe you mean to make love to the whole family !

YOUNG BARDUS.

No harm in that, my dear.—(*He approaches Mrs. Argan and speaks in an affected tone.*) I bless the day, this happy wished-for day, this day for which I so long have waited, this day the most precious of the days which my whole life affords. Oh ! miracle of nature, gentlest of the genteel, have I the happiness, at length, personally to behold this beauteous star, the renown of whose fame has resounded throughout all our university ! Yes, miss, your radiant form is so resplendent and your divine attractions are so famous that you have been compared to the beauteous Helen, the fair Rosamund, or the repentant Magdalen. Roxalana and Statira were not worthy to tie your shoes, and prince Scander himself, at beholding you, would have been guilty of infidelity—(*Mondor laughs as he proceeds*)—This, I suppose, young lady, is your buffoon, by his laughing.

MRS.

MRS. ARGAN.

You are mistaken, sir.

YOUNG BARDUS.

Yes, pearl of beauty, paragon of princesses, had not this laughing gentleman interrupted me, you should have heard a speech—such as you had never heard before ! I had not half finished. I have no idea of the immensity of your loss !

MRS. ARGAN.

Sir —

YOUNG BARDUS.

The whole university could not afford my equal, in gallantry. (*Mondor laughs*) Again ! —The most fashionable student, the greatest beau in all Halle, is to be your husband.

MRS. ARGAN.

Sir, you —

YOUNG BARDUS.

One who was the greatest favourite of all the favourites of the ladies,

MRS. ARGAN,

Sir ! —

YOUNG BARDUS,

Who will sacrifice them all to you. (*Mondor laughs*) Curse his laughing !

MRS.

MRS. ARGAN.

I tell you, sir, you are mistaken; I am not
Julia.

YOUNG BARDUS.

Not Julia!—I am sorry for you!—But
who the devil are you then?

MONDOR.

Speak, sir, with more respect, if you please,
to Mrs. Argan; and know that your gaming-
house jargon, sir, is very improper for the con-
versation of well-bred people.

YOUNG BARDUS.

Why truly, madam—your beauty is so re-
splendent—the eagle-eyed might be deceived.—
But girls at present are so like women, and wo-
men so like girls—

MONDOR.

Insufferable!

MRS. ARGAN.

Call Julia. (*To young Bardus*) I must present
you to her, sir.

MONDOR (*aside*).

I shall go mad!

YOUNG BARDUS.

If she resemble you, madam, she will be a se-
cond wonder of the world.

MRS.

MRS. ARGAN.

I have always taken great care of my complexion. When I was a girl, I never walked in the sun, without masking my face. I assure you there are certain days when, if I chose to take the trouble, I could still eclipse my daughter; but it is so dreadfully fatiguing to be dressed, and one's sufferings are so intolerable!

S C E N E VIII.

MRS. ARGAN, YOUNG BARDUS, MONDOR,
JULIA.

MRS. ARGAN.

Come here, child; this gentleman is to be your husband.

YOUNG BARDUS.

Yes, divine scion of an angelic stock, I am to have the honour to marry you. How luminous are your beauties! May the devil fetch me if I am not already as much in love as if I had been acquainted with you these seven years. Oh, ho! She blushes.—Carnation modesty! Upon my soul this was more than I expected.

JULIA.

Really, sir, I do not understand such language:

YOUNG BARDUS (*chucking her under the chin while she draws back*).

You are so charming, my dear, that I should

wish to conclude the ceremony before it is begun.

MONDOR.

I can be silent no longer. Hark you, Mr. Student, I contained myself while you were speaking to this lady, but, if you think proper to continue such absurd conversation with miss Julia, I would have you understand you will have somebody else to answer.

JULIA (*to Mondor*).

For heaven's sake, be quiet !

YOUNG BARDUS.

And I would have you understand, Mr. Merry Andrew, that I am the most famous scholar in the university ; and that I have wounded and conquered antagonists much more adroit at quart and tierce than you are.

MONDOR.

And I would have you understand, impertinent sir, that if you are not silent I shall shew you the door.

YOUNG BARDUS.

Shew me the door !—Very pleasant, indeed, Zounds and blood, fire, fiends and fury !

MONDOR.

Do not suppose, sir, I am to be intimidated by your

your oaths. Either—*(Julia in great embarrassment runs to Mrs. Argan.)*

YOUNG BARDUS.

By this good light!—Oh, that I had my Swedish gloves here, my pandour pistols, and my haram-bashaw sabre!

MRS. ARGAN *(with a sickly tone).*

Heavens! What is all that noise you are making?

MONDOR.

Sir, though I despise your anger as much as I do your behaviour, yet I know the respect which is due to the place in which I am; and at present I would only advise you to utter no more of your absurdities, while you are here.

YOUNG BARDUS.

Oh! What you are afraid, are you?—Oh the rascal!—Oh the scoundrel! *(Goes to seize him by the collar, and Mondor, defending himself, throws him to the farther side of the stage.)*

MRS. ARGAN *(with the same doleful tone).*

Help! Help! *(Julia runs for her father. Nerina enters, and endeavours to separate young Bardus and Mondor.)* What a dreadful noise is here!—Oh! Oh!—My poor head!—I shall

shall expire ! (Mrs. Argan rises from her armchair.)

SCENE IX.

MR. ARGAN, MRS. ARGAN, NERINA, YOUNG
BARDUS and MONDOR, *who occasionally, by
action, menace each other; JULIA, who in ges-
tulation conjures Mondor to be pacified.*

MR. ARGAN.

What is the meaning of this, gentlemen ?—
Proceed to extremities like these in my house,
in presence of my wife and daughter !

MONDOR (*with chagrin*).

Sir, he seized me by the collar, in the most
ungentleman-like manner.

YOUNG BARDUS.

Sir, this fellow would pretend to teach me
good manners. Me ! Me !

MR. ARGAN.

One at once, gentleman, if you please. Tell
me, Julia, what was the cause of their quarrel.

JULIA.

I must own, sir, Mr. Bardus has behaved in
a strange manner.

YOUNG

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YOUNG BARDUS.

How ! Beauteous tigress ! Charming scorpion !
Are you my accuser ?

MONDOR.

Sir, you have long known me, and I dare
believe will suppose me incapable of a proceed-
ing so improper without —

YOUNG BARDUS.

A pitiful, paltry, poltroon !

MR. ARGAN.

What does all this mean ?

JULIA.

Indeed, sir, there was no enduring —

YOUNG BARDUS.

Silence ! Silence, my dear ! Really, angel,
you know nothing of the matter.

MRS. ARGAN.

For God's sake, part them ! Part them ! —
Oh my head !

MR. ARGAN.

Let us go into the next room and enquire
farther. (*Bardus gives his hand to Mrs. Argan,*
and Mondor follows Mr. Argan.)

S C E N E

SCENE X.

JULIA, NERINA.

JULIA.

How I tremble! Heavens, what will become
of Mondor! He will ruin every thing!

NERINA.

Follow your father, madam; do not leave him
alone, but second your lover.

JULIA.

What can I say?—How can I act?—Which
way can I aid him?

NERINA.

Consult your own heart, that will give you
the best advice. (*Exit Julia after her father.*)

SCENE XI.

NERINA (*alone*).

Now is the time for me to employ all the little
wit I have to save my mistress. (*She pauses and
thinks.*) If—! That indeed—! No.—Hum!
Yes!—Mistress La Roche—

SCENE

S C E N E XII.

NERINA, MARTIN.

NERINA.

You are come just in time, Mr. Martin.

MARTIN.

Well, my charming dear, and when shall we talk of our own trifling affairs?

NERINA.

Whenever you please, but—

MARTIN.

There need no buts. Thou hast promised to marry me. Art thou still in the same mind? Art thou still faithful, or dost thou love another?

NERINA.

To be sure I am faithful.—But it is only on certain conditions.

MARTIN.

Conditions! What are those?

NERINA.

If thou wishest to marry me, thou must bid farewell to thy master.

MARTIN.

I don't believe I shall shed many tears at parting.—But why?

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U

NERINA.

NERINA.

I never saw so brutal a youth; such behaviour, such discourse! He swears like a trooper!—He is a madman, and fit only for Bedlam.

MARTIN.

We have learned all these fine things at the university.

NERINA.

I feel myself very angry with your university. Parents are very wrong to send their children there, if this is the education they receive.

MARTIN.

You must distinguish, my dear, between what the professors teach their scholars, and what they are taught by bad company.

NERINA.

I have no occasion to make any such distinctions. I am determined thy silly master shall not marry my mistress, and I want thy help to prevent the match. Agree to this and I am thine.

MARTIN.

With all my heart, but what can I do?

NERINA.

NERINA.

Tell me all that passed at the house of madam La Roche.

MARTIN.

Tell thee! — Canst thou not imagine? —

NERINA.

Nay, nay, but the circumstances.

MARTIN.

I know of nothing uncommon or new; except indeed that my young master wrote a note for fifty ducats, payable to the bearer, and gave it to Caroline, who was obliged to give it to madam La Roche. (*They whisper*)

S C E N E XIII.

NERINA, MARTIN, MERLIN.

(*Merlin makes signs to Nerina that he has something to say to her, and is perceived by Martin.*)

MARTIN.

Aha! — Who is this? (*aside*) Some gallant, or I am mistaken.

MERLIN (*to Nerina*).

Has my master been fighting?

U 2

MARTIN.

MARTIN.

Pray, sir, what have you to say to Nerina?

MERLIN.

What is that to you, and please you?

MARTIN.

It does not please me.

MERLIN.

I shall say what I have to say, notwithstanding.

MARTIN.

That we shall see!

NERINA.

He only wants just to speak a word with me.

MARTIN.

Here's a pretty lady! Devil take me if I don't believe she has already played me a trick.

MERLIN (*to Nerina*).

As I was saying—

MARTIN.

If you say any more you may chance to feel a cudgel.

MERLIN.

'Tis give and take, gentle sir.

NERINA.

NERINA.

Are you mad?

MARTIN.

Begone, Mr. Knave!

MERLIN.

We shall see who shall begone first.

MARTIN.

This fellow has never been at college; I will shew him what it is to be a master of arts. (*They assault each other, and fight off the stage*)

NERINA.

I believe the world has lost its wits, to-day.

END OF ACT II.

A C T III.

SCENE I.

ARGAN, BARDUS,

ARGAN.

After much trouble I parted them; and, for the greater precaution, I left Mondor with my wife, that she might be answerable for his conduct. Your son is gone home, and thus, having prevented the most immediate danger, we shall gain time to accommodate the affair.

BARDUS.

Mondor was certainly in the wrong. A silly fellow, who when he speaks is his own admirer. My son, accustomed as he is to the most sublime contemplation, saw how ridiculous he makes himself, and could not help pitying him. Your beau took offence, and in his warmth was guilty of some extravagance; for your great wits are very passionate.

ARGAN.

To speak freely, sir, Mondor appeared to me less to blame than your son. He has indeed a lively fancy, but he is prudent. When the wit is

is too flippant it makes us guilty of folly ; but when its ardour and rapidity are under the guidance of reason, when it is prompt to conceive, quick in combining, and brilliant in reply, the man of wit then, in the general opinion, is superior to other men.

BARDUS.

Oh ! Oh ! I understand you ; according to your definition, we algebraists are the only men of wit, and this Mondor is a frothy fellow ; who, repeating his fine similes from Virgil and Horace, is an impertinent blockhead for contending with my son, I was obliged to consult my professor on an admirably new equation of a curve, which I mean to insert in my treatise, otherwise I should have accompanied my son in his visit. I should have wanted time too ; for a friend has offered to accompany him into Holland, and thence to France,

ARGAN.

Are you determined to send him on his travels ?

BARDUS.

To be sure I am. He shall form an acquaintance with all the professors throughout Germany and Holland. He shall afterward proceed to France, to make himself an accomplished

gentleman, and at last travel to England, that he may become deep—deep !

ARGAN.

Might I advise, before you sent your son on his travels, he should be well acquainted with his own country. When fathers send their children too young into foreign parts, and before their judgment is formed, they fix all their attention on whatever is vicious and ridiculous among the people they visit. Their money is dissipated, and the whole fruit of their travels is some frivolous and absurd fashion ; an additional curl in the hair, or a new mode of stitching tinsel on the coat.

BARDUS.

Oh ! My gentleman is of a different species, —Why, sir, I have a cousin-german who, not long since, sent his son, a very stupid youth, into France, to polish and become a wit.

ARGAN.

And was he successful ?

BARDUS.

Humph ! He is not yet returned — As for my son, he shall keep company with none but dukes, peers, and philosophers.

ARGAN.

His birth will forbid him the company of the former,

BARDUS.

Nay, but he is so learned !

ARGAN.

I once again repeat, my good friend, the French are very polite, and confer a thousand favours on foreigners ; but I would not have you imagine that the best company will take the trouble of rubbing off the rust and polishing a boy who has just left college. To be so received it is necessary to be well-bred ; and a man who goes to France before he is formed is in danger of never being admitted into any such societies. He may keep an opera girl, or associate with a petit maitre ; but he will return with more follies than he went.

BARDUS.

It is necessary, however, that a young man should see the world.

ARGAN.

What is the situation in life to which you destine him ?

BARDUS.

BARDUS.

He shall not be a soldier. It would be a pity, indeed, he should be killed. He is my only son, the prop of my family,

ARGAN.

But you wish he should obtain some employ ?

BARDUS.

He cannot interfere in finance ; so vile an occupation would but prostitute the majesty of philosophy.

ARGAN.

What must he be then ?

BARDUS.

I will make him a counsellor !

ARGAN.

The bar has lately been purged of its vices ; and law-suits are so repressed that chicanery is dying with hunger.

BARDUS.

The claws of the cat will grow as fast as they are cut——A certain judge determined a suit against my grandfather, Aristoteles Bardus, and I have a desire that my son should be a judge in his turn, revenge my family, and regain the money that it has been robbed of by justice.

ARGAN.

ARGAN.

You will act as you please. Still, why send him to travel?

BARDUS.

It is a thing determined; and, as my friend, who is to accompany him, departs to-morrow, your daughter and he must be affianced this evening.

ARGAN.

I shall not for my own part oppose it, provided—

S C E N E II.

BARDUS, ARGAN, NERINA.

NERINA (*to Argan in haste*).

Sir! Sir!—My mistress desired me to tell you that—

ARGAN,

What?

BARDUS,

Have they fought?

NERINA.

No, sir.

ARGAN.

Have they quarrelled again?

NERINA.

No, sir.

BARDUS.

BARDUS.

Zounds! What is the matter then?

NERINA (*to Argan*).

My mistress desired me to tell you that young Mr. Bardus, instead of going home to his father's, is gone we do not know where,

ARGAN.

Well,

NERINA.

And we suspect that he intends to fight with Mr. Mondor, as soon as ever the latter shall leave the house,

BARDUS.

Oh, no!—He is too prudent. If that be all, do not fear, child.

ARGAN.

Pardon me, sir, but this affair may have more serious consequences than you seem to imagine. We must act with all possible precaution, and prevent mischief, which is to be feared. (*To Nerina*) Is Mondor still with my wife?

NERINA.

Yes, sir.

ARGAN.

Desire them both to come hither.

SCENE

S C E N E III.

ARGAN, BARDUS.

ARGAN.

We have had more than one melancholy example of the effects of such-like quarrels. Let me request you not to treat this as a trifle, but to join with me in endeavouring to prevent the threatening mischief.

BARDUS.

It is that cursed wit who has caused all this uproar! You ought to turn him out of your house!

ARGAN.

The young gentleman possesses great knowledge, and the most brilliant fancy of any man I know. His manners are gentle—

BARDUS.

Very gentle, indeed, to insult my son!

S C E N E IV.

ARGAN, BARDUS, MONDOR, MRS. ARGAN,
NERINA.

MRS. ARGAN (*to her husband*).

Really, my puppet, thou wilt kill me to-day!
This

This unsufferable uproar has quite deranged my card-party for the evening. We must get this chit of a daughter of ours off our hands, or we shall never have any peace in the house.

ARGAN.

Oh ! Here is Mondor, and we have nothing to fear.

BARDUS (*with passion*).

So, my quarrelsome gentleman; are you here ? — It becomes you vastly, indeed, to insult my son, sir ! — But cannot you cite Horace, now, and give us poetical authority for being a fool ? Your head is well furnished with folly.

MONDOR.

I can perceive, sir, the dislike you have to the belles lettres does but increase your dislike of me, because of my unfortunate misunderstanding with your son.

BARDUS (*muttering*).

The rascal !

ARGAN.

Be calm, sir ! Can there be so much gall in the bosom of a philosopher ?

BARDUS.

What ! sir, when he offends, when he insults me

me in the person of my son ! Do but observe his mincing manner, and his affected smile.

NERINA (*to Mrs. Argan*).

The philosopher is in a passion, madam. Ha ! ha ! ha ! It is really pleasant to see gravity and —

MRS. ARGAN.

Silence !

BARDUS.

To punish him, let us affiance our children here; in his presence.

MONDOR.

Heavens ! What do I hear !

MRS. ARGAN.

We cannot do better, sir.

MONDOR (*kneels to Mrs. Argan*).

This is more than I can support. I conjure you, madam, not to drive me to despair ! Have compassion on the present state of my mind : act not so precipitately ! Had not the respect I entertained for you withheld me, I should have taken dreadful vengeance on my adversary ; but to this I sacrificed my feelings.

MRS. ARGAN.

You did very right, and I am much obliged

to you. But I must marry my daughter, and certainly not to you, sir.—I am explicit.

MONDOR (*rising*).

Then death is my only refuge!

BARDUS.

Make haste; die as fast as you can; you cannot do better.

MRS. ARGAN (*to Nerina*).

Call my daughter.

S C E N E V.

ARGAN, BARDUS, MONDOR, MRS. ARGAN,
JULIA, NERINA.

MRS. ARGAN.

We must end the business ourselves; for as to my husband he will never come to a determination. (*To Julia*) Come here, child.—Thou hast been informed I mean thee to marry young Mr. Bardus.

JULIA.

You know my obedience, madam, and how submissive I have ever been to your commands. I am acquainted with my duty, from which I will never depart; but, if my intreaties, my prayers, can move you, if maternal tenderness has

has still any power over your heart, forbear to force me on a marriage which will insure a life of misery ! I am obliged to confess, I never can love the man you have chosen ; a person who, the first time I saw him, inspired me with an aversion which time never can efface, and which all the struggles of virtue never could—

BARDUS.

Very fine, indeed ! (*To Argan*) You have given your daughter, sir, a very shocking education !—Hear only how she pretends to reason ! I will venture my life she has not waited for your consent. She has chosen for herself. There is no void in her heart ; it is a plenum ! The doctrine of attraction !—You understand what I mean !—Miss means to stick this gilly-flower in her bosom !

JULIA.

Interpret my meaning, sir, as you please ; but it is no wonder that I should complain of your son, when I remember the manner in which he addressed me.

NERINA.

I never in my life saw so rude a gentleman as this Mr. Student : he was for proceeding without farther ceremony to—

BARDUS.

Chambermaids, in my house, never speak till they are spoken to. (*To Argan*) Do you think it right, sir, to suffer such incongruous discourse, and profane your ears with the babble of ignorance?

NERINA.

To be sure, sir, I ha'n't studied philosophy, like you, but I know what's what as well as another; and when I see rudeness and impertinence, I choose to call them by their proper names.

ARGAN.

She is a good girl, but a little talkative.

BARDUS.

You will turn this hussrey out of doors, Miss Julia, if you please, as soon as you are married.

NERINA.

You certainly forget, sir, that you are a philosopher. Why you are as easily vexed as a silly girl like me could be!

MRS. ARGAN.

Pray have done with this nonsense, it distracts my brain, and gives me the spleen to such a degree——

JULIA.

JULIA.

For the love of every thing which is dear to you, madam, do not make my whole life wretched because you have conceived a momentary displeasure.

ARGAN.

Fear nothing, child, but behave as becomes you.

MRS. ARGAN.

But where is your son, sir? He makes us wait a long while.

S C E N E VI,

ARGAN, BARDUS, MONDOR, MERLIN, MRS. ARGAN, JULIA, NERINA.

MERLIN (*to Mondor*).

Here is a letter which requires an immediate answer. (*Presenting him a letter*.)

BARDUS.

What is all this?

ARGAN (*to Bardus*).

A challenge, I am afraid. (*To Mondor*) Will you permit us, sir, to see this letter? I have reason to—

MONDOR.

Take it, sir, and read. (*Presenting the letter*) I have no secrets for you.

X 2

ARGAN

ARGAN (*opening the letter*).

You know why I act thus. (*reads*) "Your
"merit, sir, has reached the ears of majesty.
"The king is acquainted with your genius,
"and your poverty; and intends to give you
"a place at court, which will repair all the in-
"juries fortune has done you. Hasten to re-
"turn him thanks, and show that gratitude is
"not the least of your virtues." (*Argan giving
back the letter*) Pardon my suspicions, sir, nor
was it you indeed whom I suspected. I have
gained the satisfaction, however, of being first
informed of this good news, and, like a true
friend, participate in your happiness.

BARDUS.

Here is intolerable flattery! (*To Argan*) Go,
fall on your knees, and worship the Will with a
whisp who is to glitter for a moment and disap-
pear. I do but despise him the more.

JULIA (*to Nerina*).

Oh that this fortunate change may but plead
effectually with my mother!

ARGAN (*to Bardus*).

The compliments I pay him are sincere; you
yourself are a witness I before did him justice.
The difference between esteeming virtue, when
rewarded

rewarded by power, and flattering the insignificant attendants on a court, is great. He will be my friend, when a courtier, as he has been before ; and, though I am not myself of noble blood, I have too much pride to cringe and fawn on footmen. The greatest affront we can offer to the truly noble is to endeavour to insinuate ourselves into their favour, by flattering their menial servants.

MONDOR.

I am unworthy of the honour my sovereign has done me—Oh ! that at present this ~~change~~ of situation might entitle me to aspire—

MRS. ARGAN.

Going to court !

BARDUS.

The court is a booby ! A fool ! The court wants common sense ! The court cannot see merit ! I thought to have placed my son at court, but I would sooner send him to—

S C E N E VII.

ARGAN, BARDUS, MONDOR, MRS. ARGAN,
JULIA, NERINA, MARTIN *out of breath.*

MARTIN.

Oh sir!—Oh sir! Ruin! Desolation and destruction!

BARDUS.

What now?—What next?—Why all this uproar?

MARTIN.

My young master, sir!—My heart aches to remember it—

BARDUS.

What is the matter?

MARTIN.

Your son, sir!—Oh! My good master!—
Oh! My dear master!

BARDUS.

Zounds! Speak!

MARTIN.

Pardon my grief, sir, for a moment—Oh!
Oh! Oh! I cannot contain any longer. (*Cries.*)

BARDUS.

BARDUS.

Either speak or, by——

MARTIN.

Sir, he has been most uncivilly, most piteously, most vilely arrested, sir !

BARDUS.

Arrested !

MARTIN.

He is at this moment in prison, sir !

ARGAN.

In prison !

MARTIN.

Oh ! Oh ! — Yes, sir.

BARDUS.

When ? — How ? — What has he done ? — Why is he arrested ? — Speak !

MARTIN.

Since, sir, you desire I should give you a description, lend me your ear. — Pay attention ! (*He bems, coughs, takes out his bandkerchief, and wipes his face*) The sun had scarcely finished his course, and had gone to sleep in the bosom of — of Phœbus, before young Mr. Bardus said to me — Come hither, faithful companion of my

studies and my renown, the time is arrived when, by a stroke—a bold stroke—a famous stroke, we should revenge ourselves of that inhuman scoundrel, madame La Roche !

MRS. ARGAN.

Who is madam La Roche? I don't know such a person! I never met her at a card party.

MARTIN.

Have patience, madam, be attentive, and you shall be informed. (*Emphatically*) We issued from our chamber, like light-armed troops, furnished with nothing but a sling, and marched undauntedly till we came to the alley the haggard inhabitant! The youth then, raising his voice, loudly and nobly demanded—"Will you or will you not, madam, give me back my note?"

BARDUS.

What note?

MARTIN.

A note for fifty ducats, drawn by my master!

BARDUS.

When?

MARTIN.

During the two days that we lodged in the gardens of Ci—Cir—Oh! Sisyphus!

ARGAN.

ARGAN.

How! The young philosopher!

BARDUS.

Two days! — Go on —

MARTIN.

Will you, madam, or will you not give me back my note? — No, sir! shrilly shrieked the witch! — The heavens lowered, the thunder rolled, and Mercury, the god of war, appeared. The fugitive nymphs despairing fled from the sanguine field. Marja, the honey-lipped, Lissetta, the slim, Harriet, the plump, and Caroline, with the twinkling eyes, sought an asylum in other abodes. The flinty heap, by paviour ready laid, armed our magnanimous hands. Rude was the crash of windows, and in fifteen minutes three quarters and seventeen seconds, windows there were no more. The chairs crackled and crackled! The feathers flew! Shivered was the polished glass, and hurled to dust the china vase and nodding mandarin! Yes, sir, a mandarin, in Dresden taught the palsy almost as perfect as in Japan. — Who having seen but would have wept!

BARDUS.

Come to the conclusion, rascal!

MARTIN.

The dreadful din alarmed the neighbours.
A mighty lord who dwelt hard by arrived preliminaries to propose ; but we, breathing war and ruin, rejected peace. Suddenly from the high stair-case the magnanimous and lofty lord vanished !

BARDUS.

Fell !

MARTIN.

Headlong, from top to bottom ! Clamour then exalted her voice ! Auxiliary troops arrived !

BARDUS.

Who ! What !

MARTIN.

Foot, sir ! That is to say footmen. Pell mell confusion dealt its blows around, on this side and on that, on friend and foe. Then it was, amidst threatening perils, that the generous Bardus, like a lion's whelp, fell upon the foe. I followed his nodding plumes, blood-stained, and waving over his victorious head. He shewed me the paths of glory ; the hardiest warriors, when he appeared, betook themselves to shameful flight. Victory was ours, when, oh grief ! oh shame ! oh cruel and insidious decree of fate !

Then, while glory beamed upon our brows,
then—oh horrible to relate! Then in came the
constables; the conqueror was seized and bound
in greasy cords, and dirty handkerchiefs. For
me, seeing the vanquisher vanquished, I thought
only of retreat. A hundred descending blud-
geons assaulted my suffering shoulders, when
through the opening window I made a quick
descent, and by garden, lane, and alley winding,
hither brought the tidings dire! Mean time your
son to prison was conducted!

BARDUS.

Heavens! Is it possible!

MRS. ARGAN.

I am really puzzled to know who this madam
La Roche is.

BARDUS.

Philosophy in the hands of constables!

ARGAN.

Your son, sir, has been guilty of too many
folly for one day.

BARDUS.

I will be gone; I will put justice to the blush;
I will make government ashamed of itself, and
deliver my son.

ARGAN.

ARGAN.

That as you please, sir, but your son must renounce all thoughts of Julia.

SCENE THE LAST.

ARGAN, MONDOR, MARTIN, MRS. ARGAN,
JULIA, NERINA.

MRS. ARGAN.

Madam La Roche ! What right has such a creature to be called madam ?

JULIA.

Once more I breathe. (*Approaches and kneels to her father*) You have delivered me, sir, from the man who would have embittered every pleasure, and a second time have given me life.

MONDOR (*kneeling likewise*).

Deign, sir, to extend and complete the generous act ; deign to join the hands of those whose hearts already are united ! My good fortune has no charms for me, should it not render me less unworthy of my Julia.

JULIA.

We hope every thing from the generosity of my dear father.

MONDOR.

MONDOR.

The esteem and respect I entertain for you, sir, already make me yours.

ARGAN.

Rise, my children. (*Embraces them*) My daughter, sir, is yours; nor did I ever hesitate concerning your merit. I should have acted more openly, had it not been for the agreement that had been made, between Mr. Bardus and my wife.

MRS. ARGAN.

Yes, puppet, your wife perfectly understands how to manage these matters.

MONDOR.

Let me obtain your consent, likewise, madam, and our joy will then be perfect.

MRS. ARGAN.

Provided you have a good pension, and the king should make you rich—

ARGAN.

Let us not enquire concerning riches: let love only be crowned by friendship, and the marriage will be happy. Fortune is frequently constrained to follow in the train of reason and virtue.

MRS.

MRS. ARGAN.

Well, well, puppet, I am satisfied. To rid one's self of a daughter is always a very good thing.

MONDOR (*to Julia*).

May I, my Julia, make you as happy as you now make me !

JULIA.

Let me but possess your affection, and I have nothing more to desire.

NERINA.

And what do you intend to do, Mr. Martin ?

MARTIN.

Quit my master's service.

NERINA.

But you must live.

MARTIN.

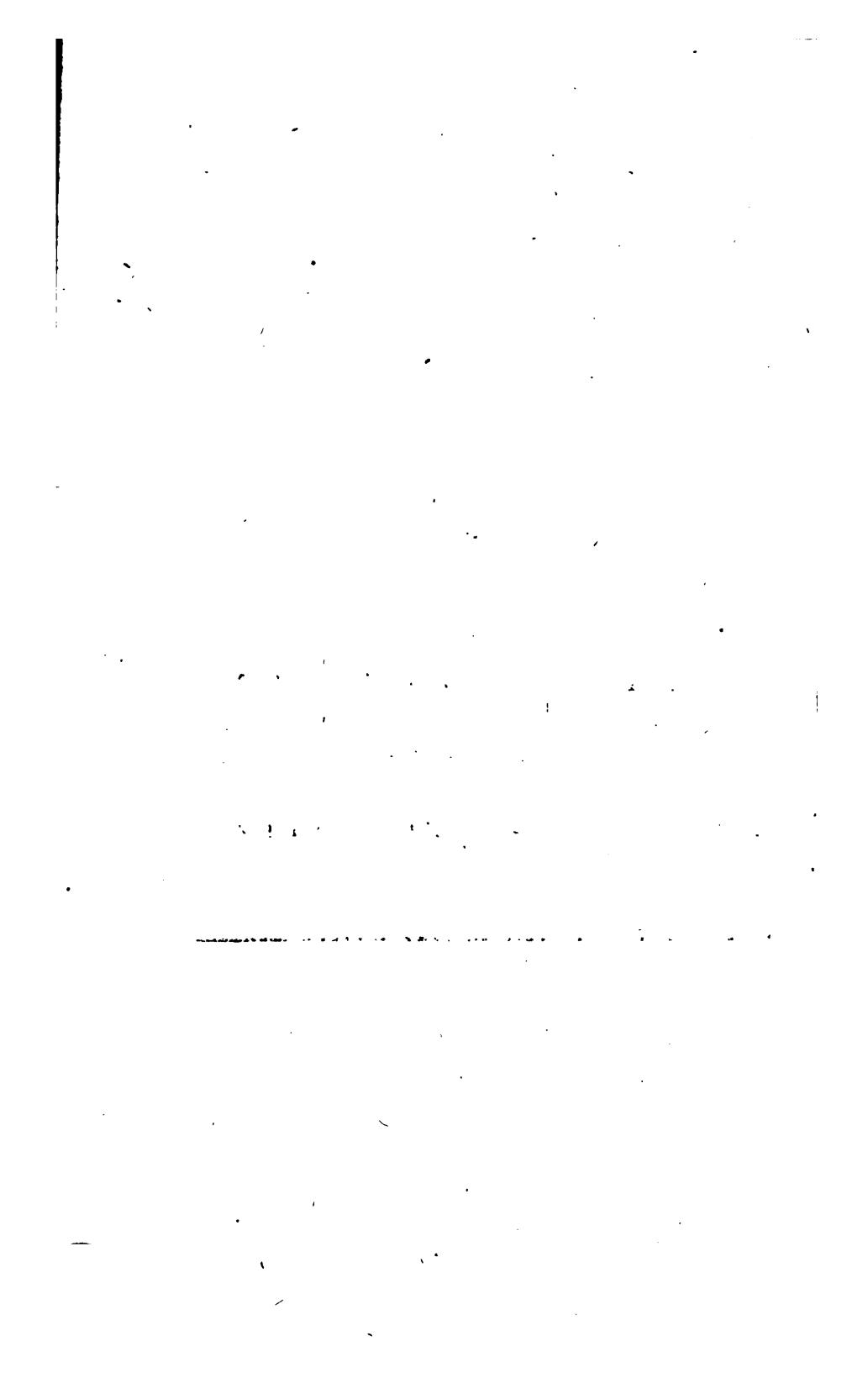
Do not trouble thyself about that ; I am a man of abilities ; I have been to the university ! I'll get to be the runner of some minister ; he will give me a place, and, when I have grown fat in office, I'll marry thee !

ARGAN.

Come, let us celebrate the fortunate conclusion of this happy day.

THE END.

E L E G Y
OF THE
CITY OF BERLIN:
ADDRESSED TO THE
BARON VON PÖLLNITZ.



E L E G Y
OF THE
CITY OF BERLIN;
ADDRESSED TO THE
BARON VON POLLNITZ.

HITHER repair, daughter of heaven, goddess of the afflicted and the affectionate ! Let thy generous tears flow fast in pity to an abandoned lover ! Let thy hair dishevelled, and thy disordered robes resemble mine ! Be my voice the echo of thy plaintive accents ! 'Tis for thee to ennable my grief, and to impart a grace to that despair into which I am plunged, by the most perfidious of men. Oh happy days, which oft with him I passed ! Ye do but aggravate my

pains, and to affliction add increasing gloom, when I compare you to the forlorn condition in which I am at present left! Yes, beauteous days, during which my hackney-coaches, stationed and governed by the high wisdom of my lover, at each shake upon my rough pavement, inspired joy; for these shakes seemed but the bewitching coquettices of my faithless lover! Days of delight, when he was master of all the ridiculous ceremonies which were acted in my streets, or in my houses! Days on which my communicative Haude and Deschamps * sung his praises, in every gazette! Oh days of bliss, in vain do I call you to mind! The hand of time, armed with his fatal sponge, has obliterated ye from the number of existing beings, so that ye no longer live, except in my heart.

Yes, perfidious man, in this poor galled heart thou art so deeply engraven that nothing can efface thy image, except the total overthrow of my walls, and the destruction of my towers. Neither, oh most inconstant of lovers, hast thou quitted me for a superior beauty; like her of Paris, whom we acknowledge to be the most perfect, of Rome the coquette, of London the debauched, of Amsterdam the wealthy, or of

* Proper names, and doubtless, from the text, editors of the public papers. T.

Vienna

ELEGY OF THE CITY OF BERLIN. 323

Vienna the disdainful. Who is it that thou hast preferred to me? Who but a dwarfish drab, whose name is almost unknown among cities! The Venus de Medicis could not be more enraged, were she to behold the little du Buisson preferred to herself. And is it thus, cruel man, that thou forgettest my public purse, which has so often been opened to reward thy industry; the shops of my traders, so often ready to yield all their wares to thee; my new town, so eager to afford thee delightful retreats?—I am choaked with grief! But I shall have the consolation to behold Bareuth not better treated than Berlin; and, when affliction shall have fapped the foundation of all my palaces, when my inhabitants, thy creditors, shall all be dead with hunger, from the care which thou hast taken to strip and leave them in poverty, then mayest thou read this mournful epitaph upon my tomb.

By this deceitful world when left forlorn,
O'er my remains in fruitless grief thou'l mourn,
Exclaiming oft, as fast thy tears shall flow,
Thy faith and truth, Berlin, at length I know!

A T T E S T A T I O N.

I, Hippocrates, by human credulity appointed god of physic, attest, affirm, confirm and

guarantee that, since the clandestine departure of the baron von Pöllnitz, such has been the grief of the city of Berlin, she has neither been able to eat nor drink : that this spring, being attacked by a violent lowness of spirits, she has endeavoured to drown herself in the Spree : that we indeed have saved her life, by phlebotomy, but that she has since become pallid, and is afflicted with a hectic fever, which preys upon and throws her into such violent heats that black clouds of salt-petre fume from her head, to the danger of her life, and that there will be *periculum in mora*; should not her regretted lover endeavour to remove her affliction, by confessing his errors, and yield her consolation by new protestations of fidelity.

PROPHETY.

When the lion of the east shall pass through Capricorn and Canicula, the terrestrial powers shall be moved, the three-headed dog shall bark, the elements shall shake, and the trumpet of rumour shall be heard in all parts, announcing changes in the universe. Then shall the bald horse die with famine, and the swallow shall be the prey of the vulture. Mortal ! Remember thy end, which approaches !

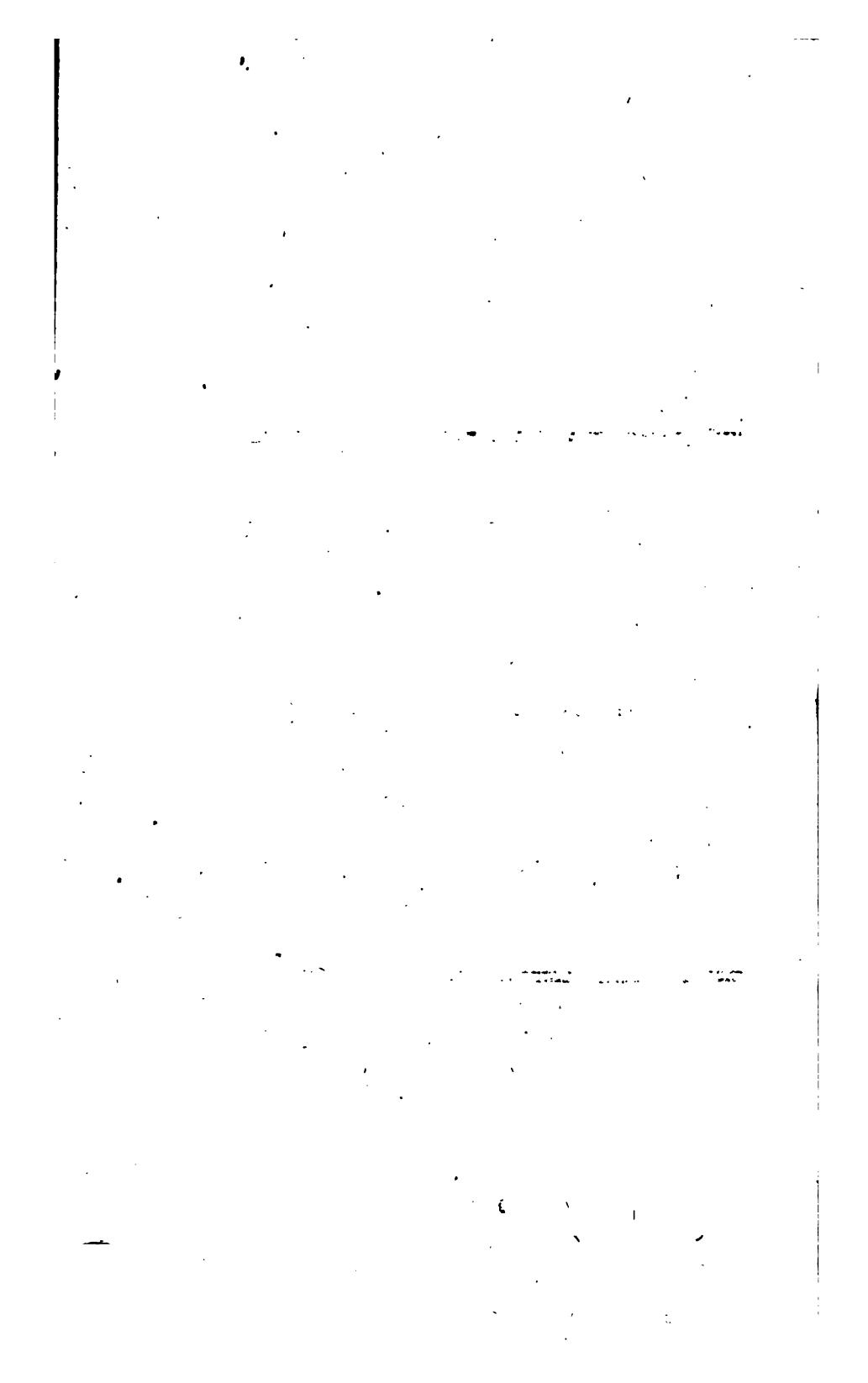
P R E F A C E

TO THE

H E N R I A D E

OF

M. DE V O L T A I R E.



P R E F A C E

TO THE

H E N R I A D E.

THE poem of the Henriade is known to all Europe; the numerous editions which have been made of it have dispersed it among all nations, that possess books, and that are so far polished as to have a love for letters.

M. de Voltaire is perhaps the only author who, preferring the perfection of his art to the dictates of self-love, is never weary of correcting his faults. From the first edition, when the Henriade appeared under the title of *Poeme de la Ligue**, to the present, the author has certainly raised himself to that point of perfection which men of genius, and the masters of their art, have generally better conceived, in imagination,

* The League, a poem.

than they have ever found it possible to attain.

The edition which is now presented to the world is considerably augmented by the author. This is an evident mark that the fertility of his genius resembles an inexhaustible fountain; and that we may always expect, without being deceived, new beauties, and a progress toward perfection, from a writer so excellent as M. de Voltaire.

The difficulties which this prince of French poetry had to surmount, when he composed his epic poem, are innumerable. He had the prejudices of all Europe against him, and those of his own nation, who were of opinion that an epic poem never could succeed in the French language. He had the mournful example of his precursors, who had all stumbled in this rugged road. He had also to combat the superstitious respect which the learned paid to Virgil and Homer. He had beside a feeble and delicate constitution, which would have rendered any man less ardent than himself for the glory of his nation incapable of labouring. In despite of all these impediments, M. de Voltaire has accomplished his purpose, though at the expence of his fortune, and often of his repose.

A genius so vast, a mind so sublime, and a
man

man so laborious as M. de Voltaire, would have opened himself a road to the most dignified functions, had he wished to depart from the circle of the sciences which he cultivated, and to dedicate his time to such affairs as the interest and ambition of men have usually called substantial employments; but he rather preferred to follow the irresistible impulse of his genius than those advantages which fortune must have granted him perforce. The progress he has made perfectly corresponds with his attempt. He has done as much honour to the sciences as the sciences have done to him. In the Henriade we only know him as a poet; but he is at the same time a profound philosopher, and a sage historian.

The arts and sciences resemble vast countries, all of which it is almost as impossible for us to subjugate as it was for Cæsar or for Alexander to conquer the world. Great abilities and great application are necessary to subdue some small district. For this reason, men in general proceed with a tortoise pace in their conquests of these scientific countries. It has happened however with the sciences as with the empires of the earth; they are divided among an infinity of petty sovereigns. These petty sovereigns united, have composed what are called academies; and

as in aristocratical governments men are found who are born with superior intelligence, and who rise pre-eminent to their rivals, so enlightened ages have produced men who have concentrated in themselves sciences which might have afforded sufficient employment to forty thinking beings. Such, in their day, were Leibnitz and Fontenelle, and such at present is M. de Voltaire. There is no science which does not come within the sphere of his activity; and, from the most sublime geometry to poetry, all have been subjected to the power of his genius.

Whoever is acquainted with the world, and whoever has read the works of M. de Voltaire, will easily conceive it was impossible he should be spared by envy. Superior merit added to extensive fame are generally revolting to the half-learned, the amphibious beings between erudition and ignorance. The creatures, being themselves destitute of talents, proudly ill treat those whom they think their inferiors, and obstinately persecute that splendour by which they are eclipsed. Malice and detraction, ingratitude and hatred, leagued themselves, as soon as they were able, against M. de Voltaire. There is no kind of persecution which he has not endured; and those magistrates who, in behalf of their own glory, ought to have afforded him protection, have

Have cowardly abandoned him to the malevolence of men who, by their crimes, have been rendered his enemies.

Notwithstanding the numerous sciences which divided the time of M. de Voltaire, notwithstanding his frequent infirmities, and the vexations which the unworthily envious have occasioned him, he has brought his Henriade to that degree of perfection to which no other poem that I am acquainted with, ever attained.

All possible sagacity is found in the conduct and plan of the Henriade. The author has profited by the objections which have been made against Homer and Virgil. The books of the Iliad have little or no connection with each other, by which they have deserved the epithet of Rhapsodies. In the Henriade we find an intimate connection between the parts; they form but one subject, divided, according to the order of time, into ten principal actions. The denouement of the Henriade is natural: it is the conversion of Henry IV. and his entrance into Paris, which put an end to the civil wars of the league that disturbed France. And here the French poet is infinitely superior to the Latin, who does not terminate the Eneid in so interesting a manner as he begins: what follows are but sparks from that beautiful fire which the reader

admired at the commencement of the poem. We might say that Virgil wrote the first book in the fervour of his youth, and that he composed the latter at that period of life when the expiring imagination, and half-extinguished ardour of the mind, no longer permit the warrior to be a hero, nor the poet to display his genius.

Though the French poet may, in some passages, imitate Homer and Virgil, there is certainly something original in the imitation, and in which we see that the judgment of the French is infinitely superior to that of the Greek or the Latin poet. Compare the descent of Ulysses into hell with the seventh book of the Henriade, and it will be found that the latter is enriched by numerous beauties, for which M. de Voltaire is only indebted to himself. The single thought of attributing to the dreams of Henry IV. all that he sees in heaven and in hell, and all that is prognosticated to him in the temple of fate, is alone worth the whole Iliad; for the dream of Henry IV. brings every thing which happens to him within the rules of probability; whereas the descent of Ulysses into hell is destitute of all the pleasing incidents which might impart an air of reality to the ingenious fiction of Homer.

All the episodes of the Henriade are properly placed. Art is so well concealed by the author, and appears so truly nature, that it is with difficulty

ficulty discovered ; and we might say that the flowers which the fertility of his imagination has produced, and which embellish every part of the poem, are placed there from necessity. None of the trifling details are found which continually recur in so many other authors ; and with whom sterility and bombast supply the place of genius. M. de Voltaire applies himself to describe, in an interesting manner, pathetic subjects, and he possesses the grand art of moving the passions. Such are the affecting passages that relate the death of Coligni, the assassination of Valois, the combat of the youthful Dailli, the adieu between Henry IV. and the beautiful Gabrielle d'Etrées, and the death of the brave D'Aumale. We are agitated every time we read. In a word, the author only dwells on interesting parts, and passes lightly over those which would but lengthen his poem. There is neither too much nor too little in the Henriade.

The marvellous which the author has employed cannot shock any judicious reader : all is within the bounds of probability, according to the system of religion.

All the allegories which are found in this poem are new. Here policy, which resides at the Vatican, the temple of love, true religion, the virtues, discord, all the vices, all exist, all are

are animated by the pencil of M. de Voltaire. There are so many pictures which, in the judgment of connoisseurs, surpass all that the master-strokes of Caracci and Poussin have produced.

I have still to speak of the poetry of the style, the part which properly characterises the poet. The French language never acquired so much force as it has done in the Henriade. Dignity is every where discoverable. The author rises with infinite ardour to the sublime, and when he falls it is with grace, and majesty. What warmth is there in his traits, what force in his characters and descriptions, and how noble are his details ! The combat of the young Turenne must excite the admiration of readers in all ages. In depicting the art of defence, in the thrusts given, parried, rétorted, and received, it was that M. de Voltaire chiefly met with impediments in the genius of his language. He acquitted himself however with all possible glory. He transports the reader to the field of battle, and we rather think we behold a combat than read the description of one in verse,

With respect to sound morality, and beauty of sentiment, all that can be desired is to be found in this poem. The sage valour of Henry IV. as well as his generosity and humanity, ought to remain exemplary to all kings,

Kings, and to all heroes, who sometimes with insensibility pique themselves on their rigour and brutalty toward those whom the destiny of kingdoms, or the chance of war, has reduced beneath their power. Let such be informed, by the way, that true grandeur neither consists in inflexibility nor in tyranny ; but rather in sentiments like the following, which the author, with so much dignity, expresses.

Amitié, don du ciel, plaisir de grandes âmes,
Amitié, que les rois, ces illustres ingrats,
Sont assez malheureux pour ne connoître pas.*

The character of Philip de Mornay may likewise be ranked among the master strokes of the Henriade. It is a character totally new. A philosophic warrior, a humane soldier, and a true courtier, without flattery. An assemblage of virtues so rare must merit our applause. For this reason, the author dug deep into a mine so rich. How do I love to contemplate Philip de Mornay, the faithful friend and stoic, by the side of his young and valiant master, every where repelling, but never inflicting, death ! Such philosophic forbearance is very distant from the man-

* Oh friendship, Heaven's gift, delight of mighty minds,
Which kings, illustrious and ungrateful kings,
Are so unfortunate as not to know.

ners of our age ; and it is deplorable, the good of mankind considered, that a character so noble as that of this sage should only be the phantom of reason.

The Henriade breathes nothing but humanity ; this virtue, so necessary to princes, or rather the only one they can possess, is incessantly excited by M. de Voltaire. He pourtrays the victorious king who pardons the vanquished ; he conducts his hero to the walls of Paris ; where, instead of sacking the rebellious city, he furnishes the aliments necessary for existence to its inhabitants, who are afflicted by the most dreadful famine.

On the reverse, he paints in the most glowing colours the dreadful massacre of St. Bartholomew, and the unheard-of cruelty with which Charles IX. hastened the death of his wretched calvinistical subjects. The gloomy politics of Philip II. the artifices and intrigues of Sixtus V. the lethargic indolence of the race of Valois, and the weaknesses which love occasioned Henry IV. to be guilty of, are estimated at their just worth. M. de Voltaire accompanies all these recitals by short but excellent reflections, which must aid to form the judgment of youth, and impart to them such ideas of virtue and vice as they ought to conceive.

The author of the poem every where recommends

meeds fidelity to the people toward their laws, and their sovereigns. He has immortalized the name of the president Harlai, whose inviolable fidelity to his master merited such a reward. He has done the same for the counsellors Briffon, Larchet, and Tardif, who were put to death by the factious. This furnished the author with the following reflection.

Vos noms, toujours fameux, vivront dans la mémoire ;
Et qui meurt pour son roi meurt toujours avec gloire *.

The discourse of Poitiers, to the factious, is as beautiful from the justness of its sentiment as from the power of its eloquence. The author makes the grave magistrate speak in the assembly of the league, and courageously oppose the design of the rebels, who were desirous to elect a king among themselves. He refers them to the legal dominion of their sovereign, of which they wished to be rid. He condemns all the virtues of the seditious, not excepting their warlike deeds, since they became criminal the moment they were active against their king. But nothing I am able to say can approach the excellence of this discourse. It must be read with attention.

* Your names shall most renown'd in hist'ry live ;

He dies with fame who dies to serve his king.

I only endeavour to point out beauties to the reader, whose notice they might escape.

I come to the religious war which is the subject of the Henriade. The author naturally must expose the abuses which the superstitious and the fanatical usually make of religion ; for we may remark, I know not by what fatality, that these kind of wars have always been more bloody, and more obstinate, than those which have been occasioned by the ambition of princes, or the intractability of subjects. And, as fanaticism and superstition have, in all ages, been the engines of the detestable policy of the great and the clergy, it was necessary to throw up an opposing mound. The author has exerted the whole fire of his fancy, and every thing which eloquence and poetry could supply, that he might expose the folly of our ancestors to the eyes of their descendants, and thereby preserve us from their effects. He wished to disencumber soldiers and camps of punctilious arguments, and the subtleties of the schools, and send them back to the pedantic and the scholastic tribe. He was desirous eternally to wrest the holy sword from the hand of mankind, which they receive at the altar, and with which they unpitying massacre their brethren. In a word, the welfare and peace of society constitute the principal aim of

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the poem, and this is the reason that the author so often bids us beware of the cragged and dangerous road of fanaticism and false zeal.

It appears, however, for the good of mankind, that religious wars are no longer in fashion; and thus assuredly there is a folly the less in the world. But I will venture to affirm we are in part indebted for this to that spirit of philosophy which for some years has acquired influence in Europe. The more men are enlightened the less are they superstitious. It was very different with the age in which Henry IV. lived. Monkish ignorance, which surpasses all imagination, and the barbarism of men who were unacquainted with any other employment than that of going to hunt, or to massacre each other, gave access to the most palpable errors. Mary of Medicis and the factious princes might therefore, with the greater facility, abuse the credulity of the people, since these people were rude, blind, and ignorant.

The polished ages, which have beheld sciences flourish, afford us no examples of religious nor of seditious wars. In the fortunate times of the Roman empire, I mean toward the end of the reign of Augustus, the whole empire, which was composed of almost two thirds of the earth, was tranquil and undisturbed. Men abandoned the

interests of religion to those whose duty it was to be thus employed; and preferred peace, pleasure, and study, to the ambitious rage of destroying each other, for the signification of a word, for their own selfish purposes, or for the fatal attainment of fame.

The age of Louis the Great, which may, without flattery, be equalled to that of Augustus, will likewise furnish an example of a happy and tranquil reign, with respect to internal government. Unfortunately indeed it was troubled, toward the close, by the ascendancy which father Le Tellier acquired over the mind of Louis XIV. who began to decline. But this was, properly, the work of an individual; nor can it be imputed to an age in itself so fruitful in great men, except with manifest injustice.

The sciences have always contributed to humanize mankind, by rendering them more mild, more just, and less addicted to violence. They are at least as active as the laws, in behalf of the welfare of society and the happiness of nations. This amiable and gentle mode of thinking insensibly communicates itself from those who cultivate the arts and sciences to the public and the vulgar. It passes from the court to the city, and from the city to the provinces. We then are convinced Nature certainly did not form us that

that we should exterminate each other from the face of the earth ; but on the contrary that we should aid one another in our mutual wants ; that misfortune, infirmity, and death, are in continual pursuit of us, and that to multiply the causes of our miseries and our destruction, were madness in the extreme.

We perceive, in despite of the difference of rank, the equality which Nature has placed among all men, and the necessity there is that we should live united in peace, be we of what nation or what opinion we may. We learn that friendship and compassion are universal duties : in a word, reflection corrects all the defects of temperament.

Such is the true use of the sciences, and such consequently ought to be our obligations toward those by whom they are cultivated, and who endeavour to advance their promotion among us. M. de Voltaire, who embraces all these sciences, has ever appeared to me to merit a part of the public gratitude, which part is the greater because he lives and labours only for the good of mankind. This reflection, and the desire I have always had to pay homage to truth, have induced me to procure the present edition for the public. I have taken every care, which depended on

me, to render it worthy of M. de Voltaire, and of his readers.

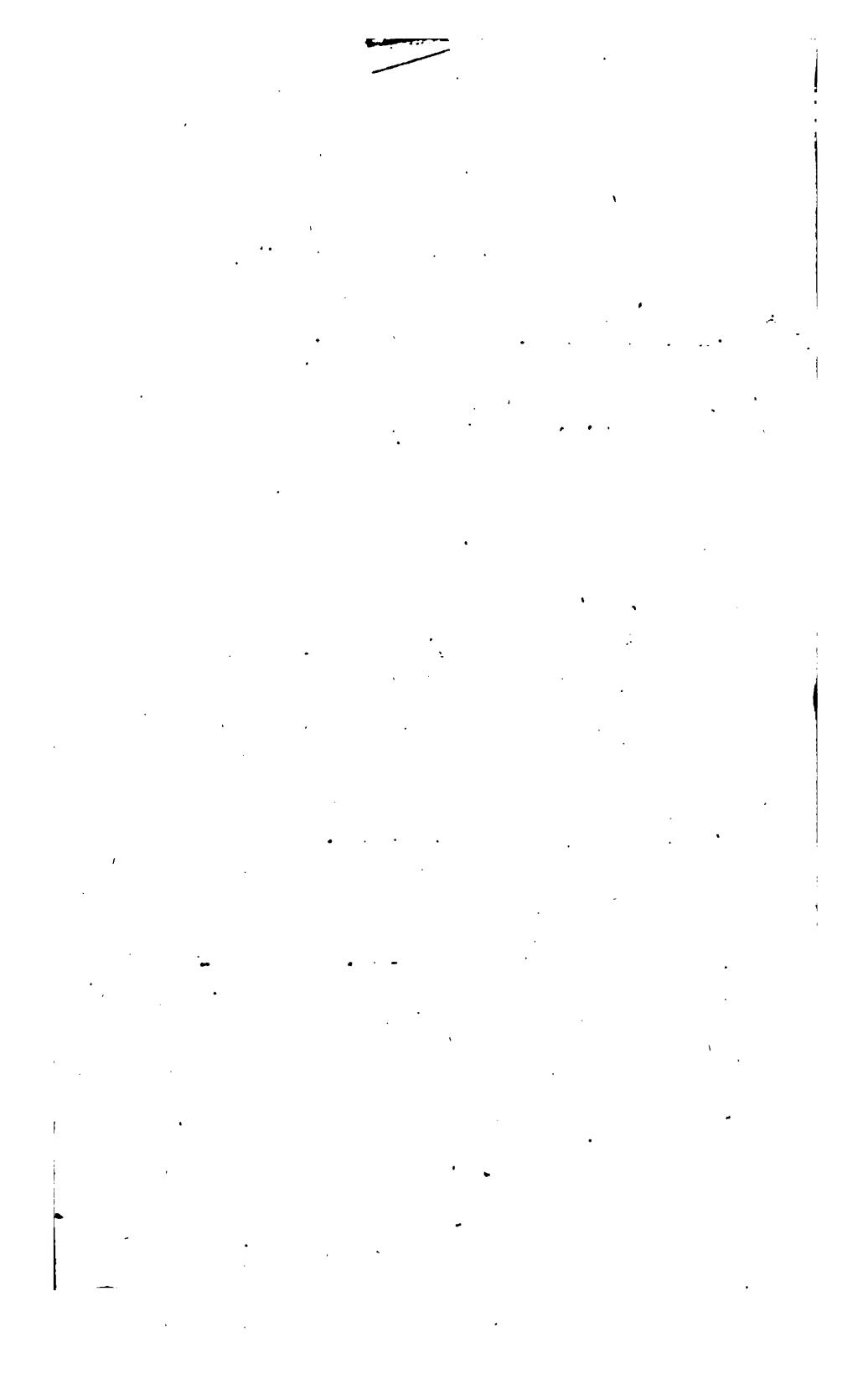
In a word, I have thought that to bestow marks of esteem on that admirable author was in some manner to do honour to our age, and that at least posterity would continually repeat—
“ If the present century have produced celebrated men it has acknowledged their excellence; nor were those whom their merits and their talents raised superior to vulgar and even to great men suffered to be oppressed by envy and faction.”

TANTALUS AT LAW:

A

C O M E D Y.

TANTALUS A LABRIS SITIENS FUGIENTIA CAPTAT
FLUMINA.



*Address and History or Statement of the Case,
by way of Prologue.*

A D D R E S S.

IMPARTIAL READER,

I AM a Jew, and the person against whom I plead is a poet; his name is Arouet de Voltaire. The subject of my suit, which I take the liberty to submit to your judgment, may develope his character, and let you perceive how dangerous it is to have him for an opponent. I shall not endeavour, like him, to seduce the public, by addressing a memorial to my judges abounding with falsehoods, and facts intirely opposite to the proofs given in by each party, and put into the hands of the high chancellor. I shall not, like him, knock at every door to present this statement of my case, in person.

I cannot, like him, borrow a black dress from a bookseller, in which to go to court and throw myself

myself at the feet of the princes and princesses to implore their protection. I am not, like him, so ill advised as to prescribe to my judges the mode of conduct they ought, or ought not, to pursue. I never will venture, like him, to erase words from a note of hand, and to add whole lines to the prejudice of my adversary. In fine, I never shall have the effrontery to tax my judges with ignorance, and to pretend it is their duty, in order to protect my reputation, to change laws made for the good of society, and to support the weak against the strong, and the man of inferior property against him who lives in opulence. No, just and penetrating Public, I respect you too much to imagine I can impose upon you, or by falsehoods to render myself liable to merit your indignation, your indifference in my behalf, and your contempt. I am a merchant, and two thousand crowns neither can ruin me nor make my fortune; for that depends on the good or ill opinion you may entertain of the trade in which I am engaged.

I swear by all that is most sacred, by you yourselves, that I neither add nor diminish to the circumstances which have given birth to the complaints that I have taken the liberty to lay before his majesty against Voltaire, and to the law-suit into which I have been compelled, by

the unworthy procedure of the most Fordid and detestable of poets and of men. I speak of the author of the *Henriade*. Pardon, indulgent Public, expressions dictated by the affliction of an unfortunate youth; who, in consequence of the cruel vengeance of Voltaire against the son, has lately lost what was dearest to him in the whole world, a father who loved, and who was tenderly beloved by, his children; of whom he alone constituted the happiness; a father who was a good citizen, and I will not scruple to say esteemed by all persons to whom he had the honour to be known. Yes, for such a father, whom ingratitude, avarice, and knavery the most notorious has lately robbed me of, for ever shall I weep. My sudden imprisonment by the guards, contrived by Voltaire, without the knowledge of the high chancellor, was as suddenly the death of this father. And will M. de Voltaire still continue so void of feeling as to hear the complaints and cries of several orphans, and to behold the tears, the mournful affliction, the desolation, the despair of a whole family, when these have all been the work of the cheating arts of the sieur de Voltaire?

Pardon, once more, pardon me, indulgent Public; my grieved heart makes me forget the respect I owe you. It is for you to speak of
my

my cause; it is for you to weep the irreparable loss I have sustained, by the death of so good a father. Yet what man among you is so stony-hearted a stoic as to condemn me for the tears with which I stain this paper?

HISTORY OF THE CASE.

ON the 23d of November, 1750, M. de Voltaire sent for me to Potsdam, and proposed that I should go, on his behalf, to Dresden, to purchase steuer bills * at thirty-five per cent below par. I answered the said sieur de Voltaire that such a kind of transaction could not fail to give displeasure to the king of Prussia; on which he protested he was too prudent to undertake any thing without the consent of his majesty; and, on the contrary, if I executed my commission well, and could procure him bills, at thirty-five per cent below par, I might depend upon his protection, and assure myself of a title which would be exceedingly flattering to me.

Such-like hopes induced me to accept a letter of exchange, for forty thousand livres, drawn upon Paris; another of four thousand crowns, upon the Jew Ephraim; and a third, of four

* Bills issued by the court of Saxony for the debts of government, and which were purchased at a very low price. The king himself trafficked largely in these bills. See Hanway, vol. i. p. 444. Lon. Quarto, 1762.

thou-

thousand four hundred and four crowns, on my father. At length, according to the stipulations we had entered into, I put some diamonds into his hands, which he kept as security for the sum of eighteen thousand four hundred and thirty crowns, which he intrusted to me before I departed for Dresden.

The Jew Ephraim refused to pay me the four thousand, saying he had no money, belonging to the sieur Voltaire. The latter sent his servant several times, and at length commanded him not to leave me till I had departed from the city. The day after I was gone, Ephraim represented to him that he had done wrong to employ me in an affair concerning which I certainly should not give myself any trouble; for that I often sold diamonds to the court of Dresden, and that it was very probable he should be betrayed by me. Ephraim at the same time offered to procure him steuer bills to the value of thirty thousand crowns, without requiring either money or a letter of exchange, till he should first have delivered in the bills, and only requesting the honour of his protection, which, at a similar price, is never refused by the sieur Voltaire.

This offer of the Jew Ephraim occasioned Voltaire to repent of the commission he had given me,

me, and induced him, without my knowledge, by the next post, to protest the letter of exchange for the forty thousand livres, which he had given me to negociate, drawn upon Paris, and which I really had negociated, by the aid of M. Homan of Leipsic. I am in possession of a paper signed by the sieur Voltaire, in which it is said I was not to be accountable for the letter of exchange for forty thousand livres, before the 14th of December. The letter was notwithstanding protested, on the 12th of this month, by the order of the sieur Voltaire, at Paris.

I was informed of all this on my return from Dresden, and I reproached the sieur Voltaire with the infinite injury this protest would be of to me, in my mercantile transactions. I represented to him that he would have ruined me past resource, had I been unfortunate enough to have purchased bills; that the ill intention he had to bring me into trouble, by protesting the letter of exchange, which I had only accepted to oblige him, was easily visible in the manner of his proceeding; I not having, like him, any protection powerful enough to guard me against the consequences of such a traffic.

The sieur Voltaire replied that I had been too dilatory in serving him, in an affair that required such haste; that every step I took was fraudu-

fraudulent; that it was my duty to endeavour to make reparation; that nothing was more easy than to purchase steuer bills, at the current price, by persons on the spot; and that he was exceedingly dissatisfied to meet me again without any such bills, which he certainly would have kept.

Hereupon I informed him it was impossible I should overlook this affair, without laying my complaints; and, to appease me, he told me he would procure me sufficient recompence, and that he would pay the expences of the protest, as well as of my journey. With respect to my trouble, and loss of time, he said I should be satisfied, and that he would begin by purchasing the brilliants which I had left with him during my absence; for that he had worn them at Potsdam, on his cross, and on his theatrical dress. Accordingly, on the day of his arrival at Berlin, he bought brilliants to the amount of three thousand crowns of me, and I returned him the balance for the sum of four thousand four hundred and thirty crowns, which had been assigned to me by him on my father. Acquittances were reciprocally given on this occasion, after which we neither of us had any claim on the other respecting these brilliants; the protested letter, and the infinite damage which it did me in trade excepted.

Three days after the purchase had been made the sieur Voltaire again sent to me for rings to the value of two thousand crowns, and desired me to call upon him in a few days. In the interim, he desired me to let him have some furniture. Accordingly, I sent him a large looking-glass, and went to him to request he would conclude the last agreement, or restore my diamonds.

The sieur Voltaire shut up the glass in his chamber, and told me he would neither pay me for the rings nor the glass, but that he would keep them to indemnify himself for the too hasty bargain which he pretended he had made with me before ; although the brilliants for which he gave three thousand crowns had been taxed by M. Reclam, before the agreement was concluded. At the same time he forcibly took a ring from my finger in the palace. His servant, named Picard, was present. He afterward shut the door in my face, and bad me go and complain where I pleased.

On the morrow, Voltaire came, with a lieutenant-colonel in the king's service, desired him to judge between us, and intreated him to bring me to his house. Scarcely had I entered before Voltaire, in the presence of the lieutenant-colonel, pursued me about the chamber, seized me

by the throat, calling me a knave, and told me I did not know the person with whom I had to do. He added that he had the power to throw me into a dungeon for the remainder of my life, but that his clemency would however pardon my crimes, if I would take back the brilliants which I had sold him, and restore the three thousand crowns, and all the writings that had passed between us. I replied this could not be; and added, he would not have bought the brilliants if he had not found the purchase to his advantage; and the more especially as they had been taxed previous to the purchase.

Voltaire in his fury would have ill treated me, and I left the chamber to go and lay my complaints before his majesty. Highly angry at the proceeding of Voltaire, the king sent me to the high chancellor, with orders to judge the cause with rigorous impartiality. I have already confronted the sieur Voltaire at two sittings. His servant Picard has already on oath given him the lie, relative to his denial of having taken the ring by force. I summon him to produce the agreements that were made between us, and he affirms he has no agreements; but that he entrusted the sum of eighteen thousand and thirty crowns to me, without requiring the least security; which is very like the act of Voltaire.

He

He farther affirms that he gave me this sum to purchase diamonds and furs, at Dresden, at the current price, and at the rate of thirty-five crowns each. I proved to him, by various notes and orders, in his own hand-writing, that every thing I have advanced is truth, and he is daring enough to reply that these notes and orders have been snatched up by me, after he had thrown them into the fire. I gave him a bill which begins, "I have sold the following articles "to Mr. &c." and he has rewritten all the lines that the writing might resemble his; and has added, at the top of the bills, "for the payment of three thousand crowns stipulated by "me." This laconic style was fitted to the small space which was left at the top of the bill, where he has erased the accent of the *é* from the word *taxé* * and has added *ables* to make the words *brillans taxables* †. He could not act in like manner by the word *estimé* ‡ because it was too near the words that follow. This contradiction, the style, the different colour of the ink, the lame form of the letters, and the beginning of the phrase *J'ai vendu* § by a capital J, sufficiently attest his crime,

* Taxed.

† Taxable brilliants.

‡ Esteemed.

§ I have sold.

I present the certificate which accompanied the diamonds that were sent to be taxed by Re-clam, and this he dares to disavow. He produces another tax, which was made by five workmen, who are all of them persons who work only for Ephraim, and who have taxed the bill according to the orders given them by Ephraim.

Just and respectable Public, what ought my claims to be? To you I appeal. Forget for a moment the immortal works of the poet and the philosopher, and do you pronounce sentence.

TANTALUS AT LAW.

*D R A M A T I S P E R S O N A E.**

GULP-ALL, the Tantalus at Law.
MAMMON, the Genius of Gulp-all.
ISHMAEL, a Jew and a Jeweller.
RABINET, another Jeweller, the Son of Ishmael.
BOTTOMLESS, the Judge.
CLUTCH, First Serjeant.
SWALLOW, Second Serjeant.
CRISPIN, the Valet of Gulp-all.
PUFF-PASTE, Counsel for Gulp-all.
WAVER, Counsel for Rabinet.
GUARDS.

* To justify what perhaps might otherwise have the appearance of burlesque affectation, the following is the French

D R A M A T I S P E R S O N A E.

ANGOULE-TOUT, Tantale en Proces.
MAMMON, Genie d'Angoule-tout.
ISMAEL, Juif Jouaillier.
RABINET, Jouaillier Juif, fils d'Ismael.
ABIME LOUCHE, Conseiller de Justice.
GRYPE-PAR-TOUT, I. Serjent.
AVALOIRE, II. Serjent.
CRISPIN, Valet d'Angoule-tout.
BOUDINET, Avocat d'Angoule-tout.
BRANLEFIN, Avocat de Rabinet.
GARDE DE SOLDATS.

TANTALUS AT LAW.

SCENE I.

GULP-ALL, MAMMON

GULP-ALL (*embracing Mammon*).

COME to my arms, my beloved Mammon. Forsake me not. Thou art the dearest thing I have on earth, the support of my age, and my solace. Without thee what were all my wit and genius? Thou alone canst constitute my happiness. Deprived of thy aid my works would sink in the streams of Lethe, and eternal forgetfulness. But thanks to thy favours, I have no such fears. The great discover charms in all I write; my name is renowned, honoured, and known even to the printer and the printer's devil. Come therefore to my arms; thou canst inspire me with rhimes, and dictate the sublimest

verse. Wherefore art thou silent? Wherefore seemest thou at fault?

MAMMON.

Sir, I am covered with rust from head to foot.

GULP-ALL.

How!

MAMMON.

Continually am I left a solitary hermit. If you are visited, I am kept recluse. Even when your most intimate friends are with you, I am confined in some corner. You hide me from the light of day, and my affliction is intolerable. I am never so dear to you as by the taper's gleam. If you persist in keeping me thus concealed I doubt you will die in this mortal sin.

GULP-ALL.

Alas! dear Mammon, how little art thou acquainted with the world! Wert thou once seen, my loss would be irreparable. I should never behold thee more! Thou wouldest be ravished from me! My grief of heart would be unceasing, and the day in which thou shouldest see the light and walk abroad would to me be a day of endless misery! Be satisfied: confide in me. Nothing can be so proper as that thou shouldest

shouldest remain here with me, at peace, in some unsuspected hiding place.

MAMMON.

But, sir, once again I am all rust by so remaining. A little fresh air is excellent for the health, especially the open air.

GULP-ALL.

Thou shalt not quit the house, I am too much interested in thy safety.

MAMMON.

Nay but, good sir, reflect; to keep me always thus confined will but increase my rusty appearance.

GULP-ALL.

No matter, I tell thee; prithee suffer thyself to be guided by me. There is no harm in a little rust. But, for fear of accidents, I like another Scapin will hide thee in this sack. (*He shews Mammon a large sack*) I am fearful lest any one should enter; thieves are prowling about; and, were I to lose thee, I should lose the whole world.

MAMMON.

How! Sir! Tie me up in a sack! Consider the consequences,

GULP-ALL.

GULP-ALL.

No, no, I will take care to pay thee hourly visits; no harm shall come to thee.* (*He puts him in the sack.*)

MAMMON (*in the sack*):

What gloomy abode is this?—Live in a sack!

GULP-ALL.

'Tis for thy safety as well as mine.

MAMMON.

Mine!—I love the light.

GULP-ALL.

Thou shalt not be permitted to see the small left ray. Do as I command thee. Lie close, for thy own, as well as for my personal welfare. Roll thyself up, and do not stir, except when I come to give thee air. (*Gulp-all ties up the sack.*)

MAMMON.

Oh! Oh! Gently!—How you squeeze me! If you should but burst the least hole in the sack, may the devil take me if I don't escape.

* It must be remembered that Mammon, who is the genius of our hero, should have his dress covered, before and behind, from head to foot, with gold coins of every species.

GULP-ALL (*with a lighted candle and wax*).

Banish thy apprehensions; I'll see that the sack shall have no holes; and I will seal it up that the air may not get in.

MAMMON.

Lord, sir, take care; you will burn my head; the wax is a little too hot, and will run through.

GULP-ALL.

Fear nothing. Lie close.—So far so good—Now for the seal.

MAMMON.

Oh! The wax! The wax!

GULP-ALL.

Do not make such a noise, I tell thee; wax grows cold in a moment.

MAMMON.

And must I never quit this dark dull dwelling?

GULP-ALL.

No; thou hast my prohibition. I purposely keep thee here. I shall have an eye on the sack. Do not think to budge a foot.

S C E N E

S C E N E II.

GULP-ALL *in soliloquy, with MAMMON in the sack, by his side.*

I must now call my valet. The rascal is a knave; a fly dog. It grieves me to recollect it. My blood boils when I observe him. I think I continually see bird-lime on his fingers. Whenever I count my money, he watches me as a cat watches a mouse; examines the directions of my letters, and reads every thing of which he can catch a glimpse. Though I keep but one servant, he is equal to a hundred enemies.

S C E N E III.

CRISPIN, GULP-ALL, MAMMON *in the sack;*

GULP-ALL (*calling*).

CRISPIN!

CRISPIN (*answering*).

Sir.

GULP-ALL.

You must go on an errand for me. Beware that you take nothing! Be cautious! Let me feel, have you got nothing here? (*Feels his pockets.*)

CRISPIN.

Sir, you wrong my fidelity.

GULP-ALL.

Ah! this is the continual way with servants ; they will chatter. But what if I should find some proof that thou hast taken something that belongs to me ? What wouldest thou answer then ?

CRISPIN.

Sir, you can find no such thing. I am, and always have been, a faithful servant.

GULP-ALL.

Thou art always eating ! Am not I thy master, and dost thou forget that I am obliged to pay for all ? This ravenous appetite of thine is not at all to my taste. Thou shouldest be more moderate. I am eternally bidding thee shut thy mouth, and forbear to gormandise ; but I do not see that thou art ever the better for bidding.

CRISPIN.

I really, sir, do not know what you would have. Your suspicions forbode ill to me ; I never am allowed to breakfast, I eat nothing but what you leave, and that is little enough.

GULP-ALL.

The lying knave ! To grumble too, after stuffing so immoderately ! Let me hear no more of this ; mind what I say, you must go this instant on a message for me to a jeweller's, a Jew named

named Rabinet. Tell him I am waiting for him in my cabinet. Let him bring with him his best diamonds, and rings of all sorts, emeralds, brilliants, in a word, all he has, that I may have the greater choice before I buy. Begone, lose not a moment. It is a business of importance; I wish to appear at court like a person of great consequence. (*Crispin eyes the sack.*)

CRISPIN.

This sack is greatly swelled !

GULP-ALL.

What is that to thee? The spit does not turn to regale thy nostrils. Begone! Do as I bid thee.

CRISPIN (*going.*).

Yes, I shall go. (*aside*) Who ever beheld such avarice ! But of this I have proofs enough; the very remembrance takes away my breath.

S C E N E IV.

RABINET, CRISPIN,

CRISPIN.

This villainous fordid master of mine, this hunks, keeps every thing under lock and key, even to the ends of candles. I once found one by chance, a morsel of an inch long, and he threatened to break every bone in my body, treated

treated me like a thief, and called me a thousand abusive names. I am obliged however to submit—Then there is the black coat, which he had of the undertaker, and which he could not wear till it was taken in—

RABINET.

Well! What says Mr. Gulp-all? Is he determined to buy my diamonds?

CRISPIN.

Yes, yes, I tell you; he is determined; do not doubt; he will take all you can bring; he is an amateur in jewels and diamonds. Follow me, and you will see whether I have told you a word of a lie.

RABINET.

I will go home and load myself with all my stock.

CRISPIN.

You will do right. You may depend upon your money; he is well provided; he has such influence at court; he is beloved by the great. Come along, follow me, Rabinet.

RABINET.

The value of what I have about me—

CRISPIN (*interrupting him*).

Oh, I understand nothing of arithmetic.

RABINET.

RABINET.

Amounts to full eighteen thousand crowns. I am very certain the court will not countenance a thief; and, as your master is a famous poet, I shall run no risk in leaving my box with him.

CRISPIN.

None in the world, I tell you. Let us begone, follow me, and don't keep counting your fingers; I will immediately introduce you into his cabinet. This is his house; enter and speak to him. (*Lays bold of the arm of Rabinet*) Stop, I had forgot; I must go before. No person is suffered to enter here without first sending in their name.

RABINET.

Well, well, make haste.

S C E N E . V.

RABINET.

I hope this visit will enrich me. If his master should buy all I bring no one knows the gain I should make. I will leave this country, and go into Holland; I shall be one of the wealthiest of Jews. I will thence traverse land and sea, without fear of death or danger, and after I have seen the four quarters of the world, I will then settle. Such is my intention. But here comes the master and his valet,

S C E N E

S C E N E VI.

CRISPIN, GULP-ALL, RABINET.

CRISPIN.

Here, sir, is the Jew ; and I assure you, sir, he is as much of a Jew as you could wish. Why, sir, he has all sorts of precious stones ; your fiery red carbuncle ! And your yellow turkies ! And—

RABINET.

Blue turquoise he would say.

CRISPIN.

Yes, Yes—I am not much of a *connaisseur*.

GULP-ALL (*to Rabinet*).

If you have any fine brilliants, I am your purchaser.—Have you a large quantity ?

RABINET.

As many as are worth eighteen thousand four hundred and thirty crowns. No jeweller in town can gainsay it.

GULP-ALL.

Well, well, show them ! Show them without more words ! I will buy them all.

RABINET.

Here then, sir, is my whole box.

GULP-ALL.

Open it !

VOL. V.

B b

RABINET

RABINET (*opening the box*).

It is well garnished—Eighteen thousand four hundred and thirty crowns—

GULP-ALL (*taking his box*).

Oh, with respect to its value we shall not differ. I have no doubt but your diamonds are good, you never carry counterfeits. (*Here, instead of money, Gulp-all takes a note from his pocket*) Take this note, my name makes it negotiable; it will be paid by my banker, at Paris.

RABINET.

It is impossible, sir, I should take this; I would rather have ready money.

GULP-ALL (*still keeping hold of the box*).

What a man you are! Go then to Dresden; I am very intimately acquainted with a banker there, who has always taken a pleasure to oblige me. He knows how rich I am grown by rhiming, and he will not fail, when he sees my note, to pay you to the last farthing.

RABINET.

Let me see whether it be properly drawn.

GULP-ALL (*gives him a forged note and keeps the box*).

Oh, yes, yes! You will have no fraudulent trick played you here.

RABINET

RABINET (*accepting the note*).

I shall certainly set off to-morrow.

GULP-ALL.

Farewel!

CRISPIN (*aside, and going with his master*).

The Jew will remember the Christian, or I am deceived.

S C E N E VII.

RABINET (*alone*).

This will either be greatly to my loss or gain.
 Yet I am unwilling to take the journey.—
 Words are but wind.—I will first inform my father of the affair—And very fortunately here he comes!

S C E N E VIII.

RABINET, ISHMAEL.

RABINET.

Permit me, sir, to impart an affair to you on which I wish for your opinion. How would you have me act on this occasion, in which Fortune seems to accost me open handed? (*Shows him the note.*) I think, sir, I shall be no loser in this business.

ISHMAEL.

What does this paper mean?

B b 2

RABINET.

RABINET.

It is a note given me by a poet, who resides at court, and who keeps only one footman. I believe him to be an honest man. I am to be paid the sum of eighteen thousand crowns for this note. He has been kind enough to pay me four hundred crowns down. I have taken leave of him, and am going to-morrow to Dresden, to receive my money; but I was first desirous of asking your advice.

ISHMAEL.

Truly, my son, I know not how to advise—I fear you are deceived!—Yes, I fear it very much!—I fear there is some trick at the bottom, by which you will be ruined. Reflect well on the subject; and before you go let the note be examined by some person. To own the truth, I fear it is not a good one.

RABINET.

How, sir! Mr. Gulp-all appeared to act with great sincerity. His servant came by his order to fetch me; I could neither refuse to go nor to shew him my diamonds. How could I suppose he meant to wrong me? He is the favourite poet of the king! He kept all my jewels, to which I agreed, when he gave me this note. He is a worthy man, and I certainly shall be paid the money, conformable to his note.

ISHMAEL.

ISHMAEL.

Do you not perceive these erasures? What can they mean, son? Think well of it. Do not be wilfully blind. The rose always shelters thorns. A note with erasures cannot be a good one.

RABINET.

Good Heaven! What shall I do? I took it without examination. I will carry it back. Providence protect me! Who ever heard of such a knavish act!

ISHMAEL.

Go, son, I will wait at home. Try to extricate yourself from this business.

S C E N E IX.

RABINET, CRISPIN.

RABINET.

I am undone, Crispin; I am ruined! Either I have made a blunder, or thy master's intentions I fear were none of the best. But as he is certainly a very judicious person (*Rabinet shows him the note*) beg him to examine this note a little, and he will find there are marks of forgery, and that it is by no means a note agreeable to the bargain.

B b 3.

CRISPIN.

CRISPIN.

This is a bad businefs!—Poor Rabinet! I am really very sorry for you! Take your measures immediately; lose no time. If the note is bad, as you say, you, I am afraid, will be the sufferer. For I know my master; he will deny the whole transaction; and by denying will support his cause; and as he has the power, he will suddenly and immediately throw you into prison. This I can assure you will happen, should he either deny that the note is not a good one, or affirm that it has been changed by you.

RABINET.

By me! I am incapable of such an act. I only request that he would give me another note, on my giving up this. Go, tell him what I say. I will wait here.

S C E N E X.

RABINET (*alone*).

Poets are often birds of ill omen, and I really have no patience with this Mr. Gulp-all. I love truth and upright dealings. It is the pride of my heart to have a clear conscience. If he will not take back his note, at least let him restore me my diamonds; or, though death were the consequence, I will go and complain to the king.

king. We shall see who will be believed. He cannot deny that he has received my effects. I will very willingly restore his four hundred crowns and take back my jewels; I should then rid myself of all this anxiety——But here he comes.

S C E N E XI.

GULP-ALL, GUARDS, CRISPIN, RABINET.

GULP-ALL.

What means all this noise?——How! sir, are you not gone yet!—What, shall I suffer myself to be cheated by a pilfering Jew, who takes my four hundred crowns and leaves me counterfeit diamonds?

RABINET.

Counterfeit! Sir! It is your note that is counterfeit—I am come to bring it you back, and the sum of four hundred crowns which I received from you.

GULP-ALL.

Guards, seize me this captain of the gang. He shall not fully the royal threshold, by his thievish arts, with impunity. A disloyal knave! We must provide him with a stone doublet. Have no mercy on him, if he does not fly.

RABINET.

Oh, Sir, I'll be gone—Is it possible!—
The king shall be acquainted with it. Hearing
of a trick like this, he is too equitable and
wise not to do me complete justice.

GULP-ALL.

Stop him, guards. Do not let him leave the
place. We must lay a strong hand on such a
sorry rascal. Take that ring from his finger ;
it belongs to me. The knave took it from me,
I pledge my salvation to it. Oh the scoundrel !
May the quartan ague teach him to steal !

RABINET (*to the Guards who are going to seize
on the ring*).

Gentlemen, the ring is mine !—Gentlemen!—
Suffer me to speak ! I have worn it these six
years ! I bought it when I was at Prague ! How
then can it belong to him ? Of this I have good
proofs. Rather let him give me back my dia-
monds, or I will go and inform the sovereign.

(*Exit Rabinet.*)

S C E N E XII.

GULP-ALL, GUARDS, CRISPIN.

GULP-ALL (*to the Guards*).

How ! Have you suffered him to depart !
He is a villain ! He ought not to be believed,
and

and I will have justice!—Guards, begone! Your hands are palsied; but I will find those who have stronger arms. (*Exeunt Guards.*)

S C E N E XIII.

GULP-ALL, CRISPIN, and MAMMON *in the sack.*

GULP-ALL.

Take care, Crispin, that no such knave ever enter the doors more. Prepare a cudgel for him if he should return, and leave me to myself.

S C E N E XIV.

GULP-ALL, MAMMON *in the sack.*

GULP-ALL.

My brain is disturbed! I am daily insnared by one or other! I cannot stir a step that I do not meet a knave!—But, let me examine my sack; let me visit my dear friend!—Mammon; art thou there?—Speak!

MAMMON (*in the sack.*)

I am suffocated, sir, I cannot breathe. I am blown up like a bladder. Should the sack burst, farewell to your wealth; I shall creep through a chink; you will never lay hands on me more.

GULP-ALL.

GULP-ALL.

Surely thou art joking, my dear Mammon.
The sack is, as I could wish, one of the best to
be procured—Hold!—That I may increase
thy worth, I will bring thee diamonds so fine
that they shall excite thy admiration!

MAMMON.

Open the sack a little, that I may look.

GULP-ALL (*unties the sack*).

Gently. Be patient—There! (*Mammon puts his bead out of the sack*)—Dost thou see
them?—I hope thou wilt guard them as a
precious treasure!

MAMMON.

Never fear.

GULP-ALL.

Swear then.

MAMMON.

By the faith of Mammon!

GULP-ALL.

I am satisfied—Return to thy hiding-place.

MAMMON.

What, am I to be shut up again?

GULP-ALL.

I am afraid left any body should come in—
Keep me these jewels. Speak not a word about
them.

them. Remain here at peace; I shall presently return.

MAMMON.

You pack me up after a terrible manner!—Would that the sack were a sieve!

GULP-ALL.

Thy wishes are in vain. I tell thee, it is my firm purpose to confine thee everlastinglly!

MAMMON.

Alas! Poor Mammon!

GULP-ALL (*tying him up in the sack*).

Silence!—Poor, amidst riches!—This is the sole end of all my cares.

(An interlude of music and dancing is here performed while the court is preparing for the trial.)

S C E N E XV.

RABINET, BOTTOMLESS, CLUTCH, SWALLOW,
PUFF-PASTE, WAVER.

RABINET (*to Bottomless*).

Well might a learned man exclaim “ Oh Times! Oh Manners!” I am come here, sir, to complain to you against a person of the name of Gulp-all—My father is dead with grief, poor man; he was informed of my loss and of the exchange of the jewels! For these are not the jewels that were mine! That thief in grain, that

that Gulp-all, by a poetical trick, seized my box, after paying me four hundred crowns, while eighteen thousand remain unpaid. He persists in detaining all the wealth I have in the world. But if there be law among men, I will have justice. The ring I wear will bring conviction of his knavery. He wished to rob me of it, and to treat me as a thief; nay, though I proved that for these six years I had worn this ring, and that I had purchased it at Prague, he unmoved called me thief, and scoundrel, and contrary to right withheld my jewels. I therefore humbly come to implore the protection of the court against a crime by which I have been so highly wronged.

BOTTOMLESS.

If your proofs are true, let them be fairly stated. However, for my better information, I wish to examine the parties. I have received the king's orders so to do; therefore prepare to plead your cause. Should you lose it, your life is in danger. The favourites of monarchs must not suffer wrong. (*To one of the sergeants*) Let some one immediately bring him into court.

CLUTCH.

He is come.

SWALLOW.

Here he is.

S C E N E

S C E N E XVI.

**GULP-ALL, RABINET, BOTTOMLESS, CLUTCH,
SWALLOW, PUFF-PASTE, WAVER, CRISPIN.**

GULP-ALL.

How! Will that fellow, that Jew, body and soul a Jew, dare to enter this court!

RABINET.

And why not?—You have possession of my jewels.

BOTTOMLESS.

No disputes.—Speak, Gulp-all.

GULP-ALL.

What! Shall imposition and knavery infect commerce, and shall they be endured? Shall fraud appear unmasked, at every moment, and shall counterfeit diamonds be passed upon us instead of true? Here have I the jewels, in proof of what I assert. They are false, and I produce them before this court, and against him whom here I loudly proclaim a knave. (*Gulp-all takes the counterfeit jewels from his pocket and throws them on the table*) Examine, inspect them, and let the court judge! He confronts me, but I proclaim them counterfeits; and will he give the lie to the most able artists?

RABINET

RABINET (*examining the jewels*).

These!—These are not the jewels I sold you!
—If you persist in this assertion I am undone!

GULP-ALL.

Know then, vile Jew, I affirm what I have said is truth. And who hereafter shall place confidence in thee?

WAYER (*to Bottomless*).

My lord, the defendant proceeds upon false grounds.

RABINET.

I protest before God and the court——

PUFF-PASTE.

It must not be—The oath of a Jew is not suffered among Christians. His majesty will admit of no such abominations!

WAYER.

Nay but Mr. Gulp-all himself has not very much the look of a Christian. Rabinet may be permitted to swear without injury to any one.

BOTTOMLESS.

The replication proves nothing. I shall proceed in a summary manner. This suit must be determined; I have received orders from the sovereign. That the diamonds are counterfeit appears on examination; but the Jew affirms they have been exchanged. Surrender the key of

of your door, Mr. Gulp-all, into court; and by this we shall see how far you are deserving of credit.

GULP-ALL.

My key!—You shall have no key of mine—What mean you by that? Think you then to play me so vile a trick? You ought to keep silence, and to believe my word.

BOTTOMLESS.

Not so hasty. Your key will terminate the dispute. I have a right so to proceed, and to insist on every proof.

GULP-ALL.

I will give up no key!

BOTTOMLESS.

Justice must be rendered to him to whom justice is due.

CLUTCH (*to Gulp-all*).

Obedience must be enforced: it is the king's command.

SWALLOW (*pushes Gulp-all and takes the key from his pocket*).

Come, come, no mummery!

GULP-ALL.

Thieves! Thieves! Oh, my key! Oh, my sack!

BOTTOM-

BOTTOMLESS.

All must be seen into, all examined. Serjeants, begone, and use dispatch.

SCENE XVII.

BOTTOMLESS, GULP-ALL, RABINET, WAVER,
PUFF-PASTE, and CRISPIN.

BOTTOMLESS (*to Gulp-all*).

Be pleased, sir, in the mean time, to sit down.

CRISPIN (*aside*).

I am afraid fack and all will be lost at this game!

GULP-ALL (*sitting down*).

Will you act thus contrary to all law?

BOTTOMLESS (*sitting down*).

It is his majesty's command, and must be obeyed. Remember, sir, that all his acts are just and good; and that he never suffers knavery to go unpunished.

GULP-ALL.

And shall a Jew oppose me thus! Shall a Jew become my adversary; and cite me before a court! — An abandoned knave!

RABINET.

I am an innocent man. I wish for nothing but right: this the law accords.

BOTTOMLESS.

Silence! Here come our officers.

S C E N E XVIII.

CLUTCH, SWALLOW (*bearing Mammon in the sack between them*) GULP-ALL, CRISPIN, RABINET, WAVER, PUFF-PASTE.

CLUTCH (*putting down the sack*).

This sack is so heavy that it has put us out of breath.

SWALLOW.

Heavy with a vengeance !

BOTTOMLESS (*to the Officers*).

Let it be opened.

GULP-ALL (*preventing them*).

I oppose the act ! I stop the proceedings ! The god of my health is inclosed there ! Should you rob me of him, a thousand accidents would assail me.

BOTTOMLESS.

Open the sack, officers, let him say what he pleases.

GULP-ALL.

Help me, Crispin ! Take hold of this end and help me ! — Pull.

MAMMON (*in the sack*).

I am the resistible !

BOTTOMLESS (*astonished, flies with the rest*).

Oh ! miracle unheard-of !

VOL. V.

C c

CLUTCH.

CLUTCH.

A speaking sack !

RABINET.

Preserve me Heaven !

SWALLOW and the reef.

Let us fly !

S C E N E XIX.

GULP-ALL, MAMMON, CRISPIN.

GULP-ALL.

Heaven I see has my cause at heart. (*Sitting down on the sack.*) My lovely Mammon, on thee will I rest myself.

MAMMON.

Sir, you are too heavy ; you hurt me ! —— But what is it I have heard ? What rumour is this ? Open and let me see ! I want air. Why have I been thus disturbed, and jogged from side to side ? What is the meaning of this uncommon motion ?

GULP-ALL.

Alas, beloved Mammon, it was not my fault ! Thou art highly interested in the trick that has just been played me. Hadst thou not spoken thou wouldest have been seized by those knaves ; but they were astonished at the sound of thy voice,

voice, and have all fled in terror. Be under no apprehension at present; I shall return thee to thy hiding-place; do not stir; after which I will go to court, and report what has happened.

SCENE THE LAST.

CRISPIN (*alone*).

I know not whether I sleep, dream, or am awake! My master is a great man, and this is nothing less than a miracle! To hear him speaking to his lack, who could forbear saying there is some devilish enchantment in the master? He interrupts the course of justice, sends a Jew to prison, and keeps his diamonds. What am I to think of such a master? Sordid, mean, and miserly; that is his character. He has entered into various compacts; he has made a compact with Pride, a compact with Avarice, a compact with Knavery, a compact with Ambition, a compact with Contempt, a compact with his Mammon, a compact with all the passions, in fine, a compact with all the fiends.

THE END.

Cc 2 A POR-

A

P O R T R A I T

OF

M. D E V O L T A I R E.

1756.

M. D E Voltaire is very thin in person ; not tall, but rather of the middle size. He is constitutionally hot and atrabilious, meagre-visaged, with an ardent and penetrating look, and a quick and malignant eye. In action, though he is sometimes absurd from vivacity, he appears to be animated with the same fire that inspires his works. Like a meteor, which is momentarily seen, and as often vanishing, he dazzles us with his lustre. A man of such a temperament must necessarily be a valetudinarian. The blade continually lacerates the scab-bard.

bard. Habitually gay, yet grave from restraint ; frank yet not candid ; politic yet not artful ; knowing the world which he neglects, he is now Aristippus, and anon Diogenes. Loving pomp, yet despising the great, he behaves without restraint to his superiors, but with reserve to his equals. Polite on a first approach, he soon becomes freezingly cold. He delights in yet takes offence at courts. With great sensibility he forms but few friendships, and abstains from pleasure only from the absence of passion. When he attaches himself to any one, it is rather from levity than choice. He reasons without principles, which is the cause that he, like the herd of mankind, is subject to fits of folly. With a liberal head he has a corrupted heart. He reflects on all, and turns all into ridicule. A libertine without stamina, a moralist destitute of morality, and vain to the most supreme degree. Yet is his vanity inferior to his avarice. He writes less for fame than for money, and may be said to labour only to live. Though formed for enjoyment, he is never weary of amassing.

Such is the man, here follows the author.

No poet ever wrote verses with more facility ; but this facility is detrimental, by being abused. None of his works are finished, for he does not give himself sufficient attention to retouch them.

His verses are rich, elegant, and full of wit. He would succeed better in writing history, were he less partial in his reflections, and more fortunate in his compositions; for which he has nevertheless merit and applause. In his last work, he has

An author who wishes to write without passion, and without prejudice, ought, it is said, to have neither religion nor country; and this is nearly the case with Voltaire. No person will tax him with partiality for his own nation. He is rather possessed by the phrenzy of dotards, who are incessantly vaunting of times past at the expence of times present. Voltaire continually praises the different countries of Europe; he complains only of his own. He has not formed any system of religion for himself; and, were it not for a little of the leaven of the Anti Jansenist, which is found in several parts of his writings, he would, without contradiction, possess that indifference and disinterestedness which are so much to be desired in an author.

Well acquainted with foreign as well as with French literature, he has much of that mixt erudition which is so highly the fashion of the age. He is a politician, a mathematician, an experimental philosopher; in fine, he is whatever he pleases. But, wanting powers to be profound,

profound, he has only obtained a desultory knowledge of the sciences ; and, were it not for his wit, would not have distinguished himself in any of them. His taste is rather delicate than just. He is satirical, pleasant, and ingenious ; a bad critic, and a lover of the abstract sciences. He has a very lively imagination, and, what will appear strange, is almost destitute of invention. He is reproached with continually passing from one extreme to another. He is alternately the philanthropist and the cynic ; at this moment an immoderate panegyrist, and at the next a most outrageous satyrift.

In a word, Voltaire wishes to be an extraordinary man, and an extraordinary man he most certainly is.

E P I T A P H on VOLTAIRE.

AROUET Voltaire, a poet, lord, and wit,
Was, from long habit, so inclin'd to cheat
That, when he came to cross the Stygian lake,
Less than his fare Charon he swore should take :
The brutal boatman, prone to tyrannize,
Back sent him with a kick, and here he lies.

VOLTAIRE's

VOLTAIRE's FAREWEL TO THE KING.

NOT all your virtues, worth and wiles,
 Not all your gifts and gracious smiles,
 Can longer in my mem'ry live.
 With dang'rous and seductive arts,
 Like a coquette, you win all hearts,
 But have, alas ! no heart to give.

THE KING's REPLY.

PRESUME not that your worth and wiles,
 Your virtues, gifts, seductive smiles,
 Shall longer in my mem'ry live.
 Yours, traitor, are the dang'rous arts ;
 You the coquette, who wins all hearts ;
 'Tis you who have no heart to give.*

* The above epitaph and epigrams, which in a poetical version were only capable of being imitated, are so intimately connected with the precise state of the feelings of these two extraordinary men, at the critical moment of their quarrel, that justice to them and the reader requires the originals, with a more literal prose translation, should be inserted. T.

EPITAPHE DE VOLTAIRE.

Ci-git le seigneur Arouet
 Qui de friponner eut manie.
 Ce bel-esprit toujours adrait
 N'oublia pas son intérêt :
 Même en passant dans l'autre vie,

Lors

Lors qu'il vit le sombre Achéron,
Il chicana le prix du passage de l'onde ;
Si bien que le brutal Caron,
D'un coup de pied au ventre appliqué sans façon,
Nous l'a renvoyé dans ce monde.

BILLET DE CONGÉ DE VOLTAIRE.

Non, malgré vos vertus, non, malgré vos appas,
Mon ame n'est point satisfaite.
Non, vous n'êtes qu'une coquette
Qui subjuguez les cœurs, & ne vous donnez pas.

REPONSE DU ROI.

Mon ame sent le prix de vos divins appas,
Mais ne présumez point qu'elle soit satisfaite.
Traître vous me quittez pour suivre une coquette ;
Moi je ne vous quitterois pas.

EPITAPH ON VOLTAIRE.

Here lies lord Arouet, a man possessed by the spirit of cheating. This artful wit never forgot his interest: even in his passage to the other world, when he saw the gloomy Acheron, he disputed concerning the fare; insomuch that the brutal Charon, with a very unceremonious kick, sent him back to earth.

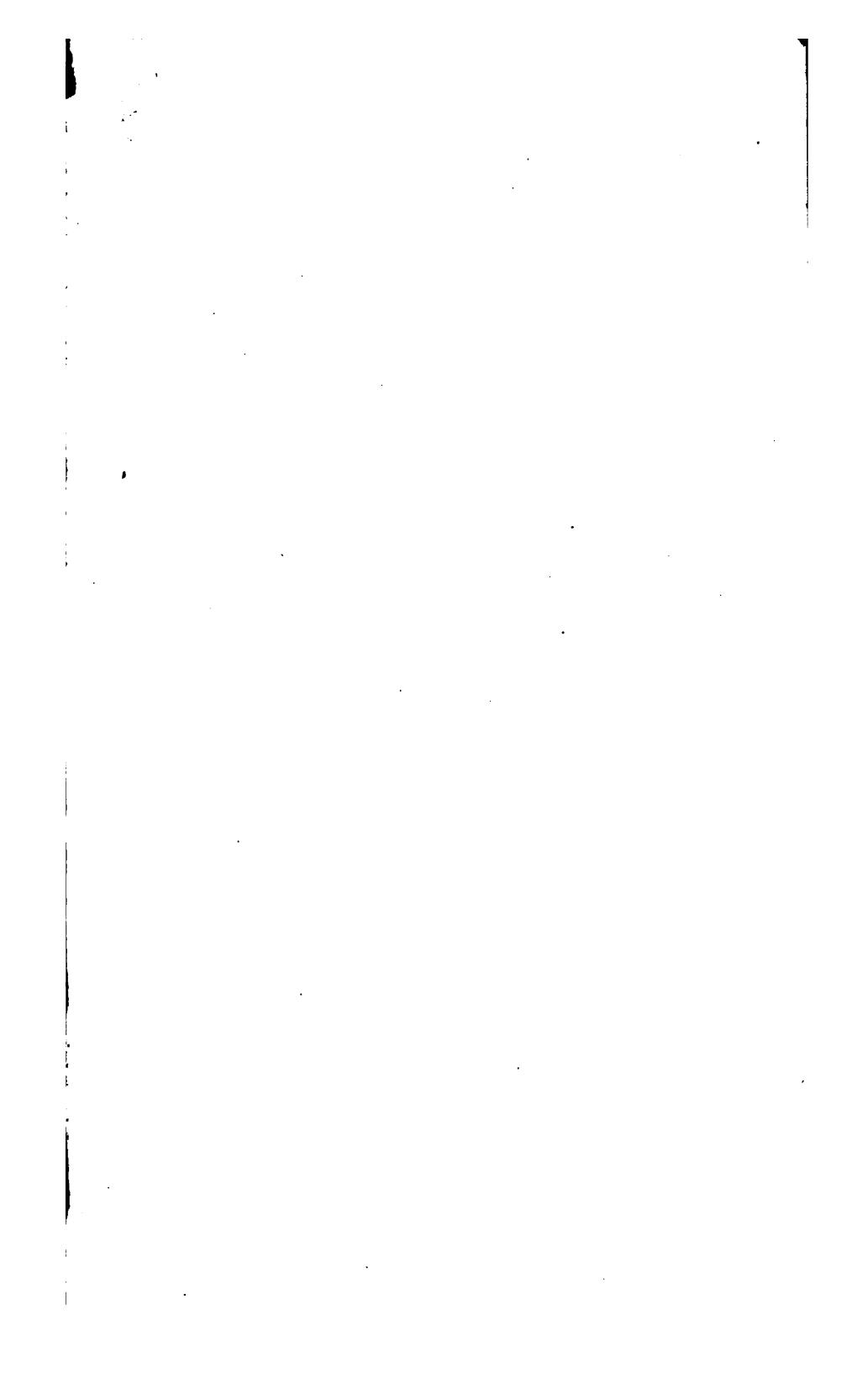
VOLTAIRE'S FAREWEL TO THE KING.

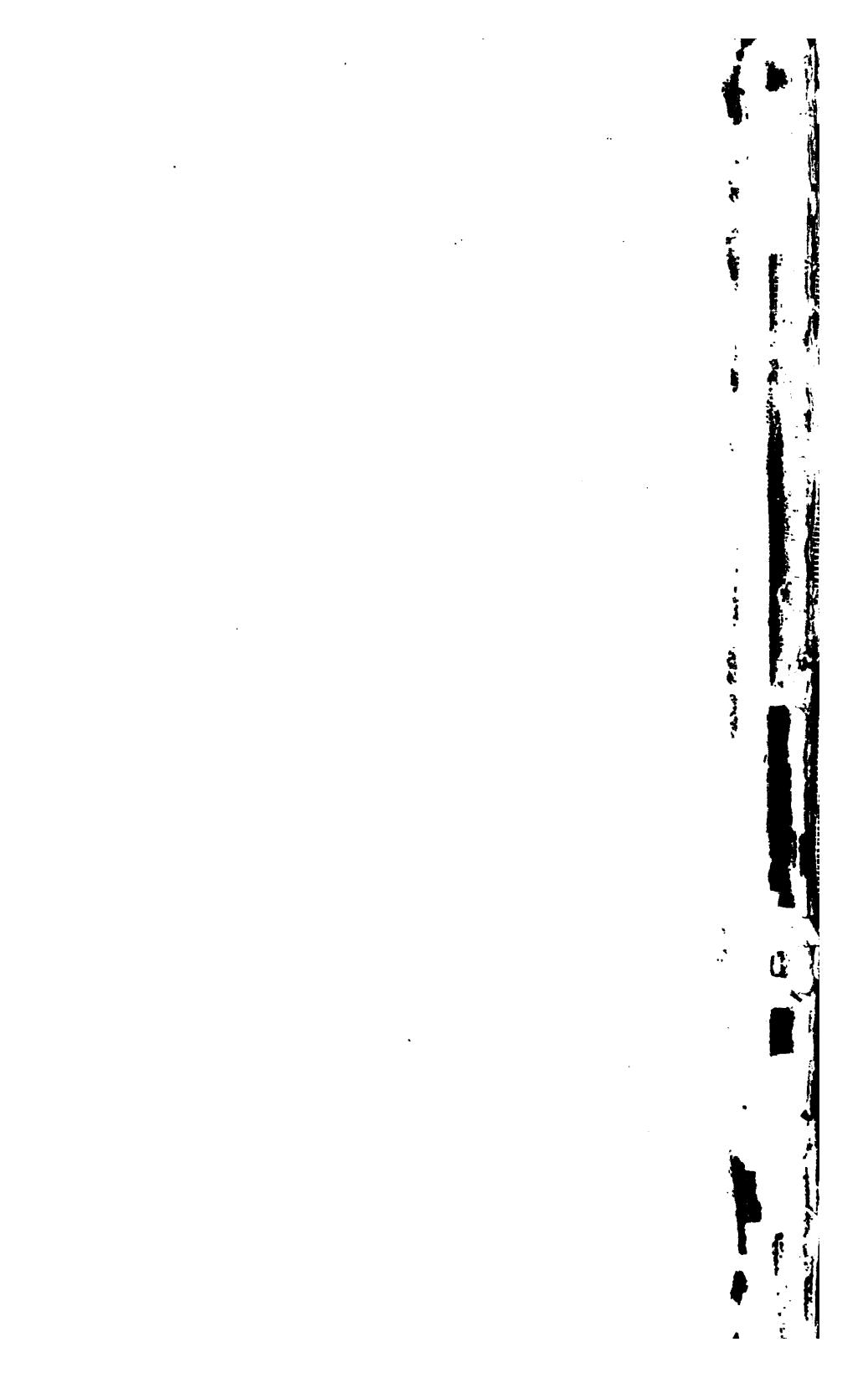
No, in despite of your virtues, in despite of your gifts, my soul is not satisfied—No, you are but a coquette; you subjugate the hearts of others, but give no heart in return.

THE KING'S REPLY.

My soul feels the worth of your divine gifts, but do not presume it is satisfied. You, traitor, forsake me to follow a coquette; I would not forsake you.









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